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THE DIALECTICS OF CHANGE IN PLANTATION SOCIETY:
PRODUCTION ORGANIZATION AND POLITICS IN ST. KITTS, WEST INDIES

by



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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Dialectics of Change in Plantation Society: Production Organization and Politics in St. Kitts, West Indies" submitted by David H. Bai in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

ABSTRACT

The problem of this thesis is the explanation of social, economic and political change in St. Kitts, West Indies, by referring to internal conflicts as the basis of change and external factors as the conditions of change. The internal conflicts of the plantation mode of production exist between the feudal-like social relations of production (in which labourers are subjected to a high degree of coercion through the colonial political structure) and the capital-intensive character (and goal of surplus appropriations) of most of the means of production. In addition, both throughout its history and until very recently, St. Kitts as a colony was greatly influenced by such external factors as the availability of British capital, the condition of the international sugar market, and the vagaries of the Crown Colony system.

There have been four major changes in St. Kitts social, economic and political history. First, the post-1834 shift from a slave plantation system to one based upon free labour. Second, and in response to scarce capital, a shift during the late 1830's and early 1840's from free labour to labour which was bound under the old plantation system through the relationships between landlord-capitalists and tenant-employees. Third, a change from the old to the modern plantation system with the 1912 establishment of the sugar factory, centralizing both the sugar-making process and the corresponding organization of production. Fourth, a current shrinkage of the estates sector labour force, a rapid fall in sugar production, and a decline in the St. Kitts people's dependence upon the sugar industry.

The first change was brought about through political decisions, primarily due to the restricted nature of the organization of production

based on slavery and international trade. The second was based in the abundance of labour and scarcity of capital during the 1840's British commercial crisis. The third resulted from a crisis in the old plantation system, which was characterized by a small and decentralized mode of production in an era of rapidly expanding world sugar production and competition from Continental beet sugar. It brought a reduction in the number of workers and in sugar production costs. The fourth change resulted from working class struggle for national liberation and political emancipation.

This thesis attempts to examine these changes in terms of a dialectical model, describing internal class conflicts in plantation society as the basis of change, while external factors are seen as the conditions under which these occur, becoming operative only through the internal factors. The development of modern nationhood in a post-colonial plantation society is seen as occurring through the development of self-reliance in class and political struggle, rather than through reliance upon external ideology and capital.

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PART ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

CHAPTER ONE

PROBLEMS AND METHODOLOGY

A. Introduction

This thesis is concerned with two problems; one historical and concrete, the other general and theoretical. The concrete problem deals primarily with the process and organization of production and the formation of social classes and class consciousness in St. Kitts, West Indies. The general problem, of which the former is but an instance, concerns the nature and future of the plantation mode of production in developing societies.

The word "dialectics" appears in the title and in this thesis it is used in no more than a descriptive sense, referring to the conflicts within Kittitian social life, which in my view generate social change. In this context two further comments are necessary. First, when discussing the underdeveloped or Third World, it is usual to emphasize the conflict between the underdeveloped region and the outside, developed one. In this thesis, however, the internal conflicts of social class, race, ethnicity, and organization of production will be described. This is not to deny that the conflicts between social classes, racial groups, and factory and estate do not have their external aspects, but it is not enough to use the external aspect alone, usually under the name of "imperialism", to explain changes occurring in specific societies. Thus, and in classic dialectical fashion of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, I hope to illustrate how demands for rationalization of the sugar industry in St. Kitts lead to certain technological changes which in turn lead to a restructuring of Kittitian society and the formation of new demands on

the sugar industry.

The second necessary comment concerns another aspect of the approach taken here and which is summarised under the term "dialectics". The conflicts described are not only the mechanical ones of economics, production and social structure. They include the growing consciousness or awareness among the working classes of St. Kitts about the nature of their own society. Thus, it is hoped that this thesis will reflect, however slightly, the way in which some of the more astute workers understand the nature of their society and how it may change. The restructuring mentioned above has led to increased political activity, and it is another aim of the thesis to show how this increasing awareness or consciousness has affected and will affect the plantation system.

In my study of the changes within the St. Kitts plantation system, I will show that external factors, such as British colonial power, international sugar markets, and foreign capital are necessary conditions of change, but the specific changes in St. Kitts have been determined by internal factors of land utilization and the labour processes, i.e. the way in which labour has been organized with varying technological factors to carry out production in St. Kitts. Thus, as Eric Williams argues (1966), the abolition of slavery occurs within the context of changes in the British economy and society and consequent political struggles, but after Emancipation the results were not the same all over the British Caribbean. In the larger territories land was available for settlement and the development of subsistence agriculture, and the freed slaves took advantage of this. The demand for labour on the plantations was met in part by rising wages, but mostly by the importation of indentured labourers from Asia and the mid-Atlantic islands.

In the smaller islands such as St. Kitts, all the productive land was monopolized by the planters, thus, there was no structural threat to the plantation system. The freed slaves had literally nowhere else to go. The termination of the apprenticeship system which brought about the legal obligation of the labourers to provide labour power to the planters did not lead to the development of free labour conditions and the development of an internal commodity market. The power of the planter class - an internal condition - transformed the slave plantation system into a plantation system of bound labour based on rents and wages (landlords as employers; tenants as employees) especially through the use of powers of eviction and lowering money wages. As we shall see, this bound labour was one of the major bases for the development of an old plantation system which lasted well into the present century. Thus, as far as the history of St. Kitts is concerned, the abolition of slavery was a prerequisite, without which no subsequent change was possible. The cause of specific changes, however, is found in the internal conditions of St. Kitts, in particular in the arrangement of land, labour and capital found in this island.

It is this relationship between external and internal factors which gives us a key to understanding the plantation system of St. Kitts.

B. Plantation mode of production

In a capitalist productive system, free workers are separated from the means of production, since the capitalists have private ownership of the latter. This is of fundamental importance, since the capitalists are then able to unite the two basic elements of production (labour and the means of production) in such a way as to produce a surplus for themselves - i.e. to obtain a certain amount of unpaid labour.

Production here is undergone for its "exchange value", with commodities being produced solely for market exchange rather than for the producers' consumption as would be the case in production for "use value". In these respects, a conflict exists between the social character of production and the private character of ownership.

The labour process, turned into the process by which the capitalist consumes labour-power, exhibits two characteristic phenomena. First, the labourer works under the control of the capitalist.....secondly, the product is the property of the capitalist and not that of the labourer, its immediate producer...(Marx, 1965: Vol I, 186).

There has been a great deal of controversy among scholars concerned with the origins of capitalist institutions (Hobsbawm, 1964; Dobb, 1968; Sweezy, 1968; Frank, 1969; Cox, 1964) which has been due mainly to differing emphases on the development of feudal societies and their transformation into capitalist societies. One side stresses the changes of the labour process in relation to the means of production, while the other stresses changes in the exchange system of the commodity. Both sides agree upon the fundamental importance of capital, but they disagree as to how it came about; one side stresses internal causes of change and the other the external influences on these. Some scholars (Sweezy, 1968; Frank, 1969; Polyani, 1967; Dalton, 1971) have stressed the development of colonialism and imperialism in a metropolitan-satellite relationship of trade (an unequal exchange relationship), seeing these as the crucial factors that replaced the feudal mode of production and led to production for exchange value rather than simply for use value. Such an approach involves the study of capitalist development in metropoli and the development of underdevelopment in the satellites. Some others (Dobb, 1968; Mao, 1967; Norman, 1940; Laclau, 1971)

although acknowledging the importance of the development of international trade and a market system, do not regard these external causes as crucial for understanding every society, stressing instead internal causes; the increasing conflict between the inefficiency of feudal production (due in part to the unfree condition of labour), accelerated population increase, and the increasing demand of the ruling class for revenue (surplus appropriation). These are seen as principal causes of crisis in feudal society, which external causes (trade expansion) help to transform.

It is not my purpose here to argue one side over the other, but rather to show that the plantation mode of production is characterized at best as a part-feudal and part-capitalist mode of production, where the social relationships of production are based on labour in an "unfree" condition and the means of production are organized as a capitalist enterprise, the commodity being produced solely for its exchange value and to allow surplus accumulation by the landlord-capitalists, rather than for local consumption. Furthermore, the plantation mode of production developed within the context of a colonial structure; a domestic market (for labour or commodities) failed to develop, since the key sectors of the plantation system are foreign owned, and all the productive land (the means of production) is controlled by the owners of estates for production aimed at foreign markets, thus dominating all other social institutions. The West Indies sugar plantation system is therefore critically influenced by changes in international markets and imperial politics.

As an agro-social unit, the plantation system has the following characteristics:

- (a) specialization in tropical products;
- (b) a large resident labour force of unskilled workers who were originally imported on a large scale; and
- (c) a small managerial staff relying on a high degree of coercion and control which varies under different relations of production; e.g. after the Emancipation, planters used their landlord status with the power of eviction as an important means to bind the workers to employment.

As a social and political unit, the social structure of the plantation community and the pattern of interpersonal relations within it correspond to a great extent with the authority structure governing the pattern of economic organization. A plantation society constitutes a "total institution" as defined by Goffman (1961), namely an organized group with well-defined boundaries and a structure approaching an internal caste system. The structure of the society is dominated by the plantation economic system and its changes, which in turn are influenced by the colonial nature of the system's inception, regardless of whether its location is in the New World or elsewhere (Beckford, 1972). The St. Kitts plantation system, which has been the prime factor in the transformation of the social and political life of the island for over 300 years, exhibits much of the dual quality of the plantation type described above; its feudal-like social relationships (race and caste) predominate, while the means of production have been highly capitalistic (see Chapters Four and Five). I will show that the St. Kitts plantation system (its organization of production and its division of labour) developed increasing conflicts, not only within its internal social and political relationships, but also between itself and Britain. The former were of a class nature, while the latter constituted the problem of colonialism and a national liberation

struggle. These two conflicts are related to the extent that one cannot be analyzed without considering its changing structural relationship with the other; not to do so would result in a mechanistic, and at best one-sided, explanation. I will further show how the conflicts among internal factors are the basis of change, and that external factors are conditions of change which become operative only through internal factors.

These internal factors consist basically of the class nature of the plantation mode of production. A small number of white planters monopolize land ownership (the means of production) while the majority of the population is forced to work for the plantation system, initially through direct coercion (slavery) but gradually changing to indirect means such as tenancy and the wage system. The greatest problem for the St. Kitts plantation system during the slavery period was the heavy dependence by a diminishing proportion of white planters upon slave labour, and the growing cost of maintaining and preventing rebellion among the ever-increasing slave population. The more prosperous a slave plantation was, and the more surplus accumulation it desired, the greater was this conflict, as even greater numbers of slaves had to be imported to meet the growing need for labour. At the same time, control of rebellion grew more difficult with increasing prosperity among the white population, since planters left the island at a greater rate, either due to their prosperity (when they maintained ownership on an absentee basis) or because they were forced out by competition. There was, on the one hand, increasing exploitation and impoverishment of the growing slave population, and on the other the concentration of wealth in the hands of an ever smaller number of planters through competition among themselves. This trend persists to the present time.

The external factors producing conflicts between St. Kitts and Britain were British capital and its monopoly of the marketing (or exchange) system, and the colonial political structure which made surplus accumulation possible. For example, in recent years British capital monopolized factory ownership and made increasing use of technological knowledge for cutting production costs. During the slavery period, the rapid development of the slave plantations in St. Kitts was encouraged through preferential terms under which their sugar was marketed in Britain. As the planters' wealth grew, the British merchant-capitalists levied increasingly higher duties on sugar, to the point where they outstripped the price of sugar in London. Thus planters found themselves in great economic difficulties, caught between falling prices (through overproduction) and increasing production costs, hindered by the restricted trading relationships enforced by the Navigation Acts. The result of the ensuing struggle between the planters and the British merchant-capitalists led to the Emancipation of slaves and the transformation of the slave plantation system into what I will term the "old plantation system", which was based on "free" labour. In other words, it was in Britain that the changes in St. Kitts originated. However, it can be seen that for an adequate understanding of changes in St. Kitts it is more important to explain how they became operative through internal factors.

For this reason, I will stress the feudal-like social relationships of production which are characteristic of the present-day St. Kitts plantation system (especially in the estates sector), and at the same time I will stress the capital-intensive character of the means of production (especially the increasing technological efficiency of the centralized sugar factory). The subsequent conflicts between these two,

the development of class antagonisms and working class consciousness, and the social and political aspects of these in relation to further change form the major theme of this thesis. In this approach, I will emphasize Frank's thesis of the development of underdevelopment in St. Kitts, although in explaining this I will not stress the metropolis-satellite trading relationship (i.e. the external context of change) as Frank does, but instead will stress the importance of internal class structures, the feudal-like social relations of production. Due mainly to the total domination of the plantation economic system, the plantation society is in one respect more radically characterized by the development of underdevelopment than some other colonized societies such as Kenya and India where metropolitan control of the economy was not as total. Nor did colonialism last as long there as it did in the plantation society, due either to the local population's ability to resist colonial domination, or to the inability of colonizers to convert the entire country into a plantation society. This is not to say that there was no resistance by slaves or later "free" labourers against colonial domination in plantation societies. On the contrary, there has been endemic resistance, marked by numerous slave rebellions and workers' strikes (officially labelled as "riots") throughout the history of the West Indies (see Chapters Three and Five). However, the protagonists of rebellions had no sense of "national liberation" from foreign domination at first. The feeling of being a nation, a group of people with their own history formed through continuous residence, was lacking, as the oppressed people had been imported from different parts of Africa until the early 19th Century. Early rebellions were concerned both with economic grievances and the unfree condition of slavery; they extended to the political realm as a

class, and at an embryonic stage had the character of a national liberation struggle, as exemplified by the Haitian Revolution of 1795. With the formation of an organized class in the late 1930's, and the development of working class consciousness, St. Kitts workers led the national liberation struggle against direct colonial rule. At present, working class politics tends to concentrate upon the development of an independent nation (i.e. away from the colonial plantation system) and there is increasing awareness of the non-viability of the plantation system as a suitable organization of production for this purpose. At present, the St. Kitts plantation system is in a state of crisis, and the approach adopted in this thesis would explain this more by reference to the very intense class struggles rather than to changes in the exchange system (especially concerning British entry into the European Common Market).

The plantation mode of production is therefore distinct from other modes of production. Historically speaking, it arose in relation to the capitalist mode of production. More specifically, it played a crucial role in stimulating the world-wide growth of merchant capital accumulation (which was the foundation of industrialization and the development of modern capitalism in the metropolitan country), the corresponding decline of the feudal mode of production, and the development of underdevelopment in the West Indies. The plantation mode of production stimulated world trade at the expense of the plantation society itself, not because its production declined or remained stagnant under the impact of world trade, but because of expansion in the plantation mode of production itself. Therefore a fundamental question concerns the nature of the social relations of production under which the expansion of sugar production was carried out. This was preconditioned by the colonial

character of production, where metropolitan capital dominated the plantation society through its complete control of land and of labour. This prevented the plantation mode of production from transforming from one stage to another, and it was only after the crisis of the late 19th Century (when the plantation system of production was unable to compete through lack of efficient technology and the necessary institutions) that it was forced to change. However, only on the factory side of St. Kitts sugar production did the plantation system achieve technological efficiency and the necessary centralized institutions (see Chapter Three).

Wolf and Mintz (1957) have worked out what they describe as the "general and necessary conditions" for the development of plantation types of society which correspond to the mode of production types employed here. These are:-

(1) A technology adequate for the production of a surplus. In terms of available techniques, the individual must be able to produce more than his culturally defined consumption needs; i.e. through the use of technology it must be possible to accumulate a surplus.

(2) Class stratification or the possibility of stratification by class groupings. This allows the necessary differential access to the means of production and distribution, and permits the rise of a land-owning entrepreneurial class which appropriates much of the surplus produced by the working class.

(3) Production for a market or the possibility of such. All plantation types are organized for the sale of a surplus to an outside market, and in response to the growth of such a market tend to specialize in the production of single commodities.

(4) Capital accumulation or the possibility of such. A certain

level of capital accumulation must be prevalent in the larger society (the metropolis) and groups of investors must be willing to invest in the supplying areas or in developing new ones.

(5) A political-legal system which can support the operation of plantations. Land areas and labour forces may be provided by means of invoking political-legal sanctions and at other times by means of some form of force such as the expropriation of native land, taxes, etc. to the advantage of the plantation. Furthermore, some form of force is maintained to preserve the existing class structures and the operations of the plantations.

From these general and necessary conditions, Wolf and Mintz developed two types of plantations, based on their studies of central America and Puerto Rico, West Indies, namely the "hacienda" and the "plantation" (1957:380-412). It is evident that the Wolf-Mintz types refer to a plantation system's socio-economic formation, a concrete type of society within which the plantation mode of production holds a dominant position. Although Wolf and Mintz did not intend them to be polar types, nevertheless these two types are based upon the outgrowths of two different societies. Since I will be dealing in this thesis with the evolution of the plantation system in St. Kitts, I will use Wolf's "old style" and "new style" types of plantation socio-economic formation (1958), although I have used the terms "old plantation system" and "modern plantation system" respectively to describe the changing situation in St. Kitts. Wolf described these two types in his study of Puerto Rico, and distinguished between them mainly on the basis of coffee plantation versus sugar plantation, and their relationship to class structures and community. He stated this as follows:-

On the old-style plantation, labour is bound and part of the resources of the enterprise are employed to underwrite the consumption needs of the workers and the status needs of the owners. On the new-style plantation, in contrast, labour is free, and all consumption needs are divorced from the operation of the enterprise.(1958:144)

He further states that these two types had different relationships between the owners and labour, the old-style plantation being characterized by the "dominance of personalized ties" and the new-style by the "dominance of impersonal ties". Thus under the former, the cultural adaptations of workers are "general" as they are competing for access to "favours and goods" from the same source (i.e. from the plantation), while under the latter their adaptations are "highly specialized", based on proletarian groups. In other words, under the modern system, capital surplus accumulation differs radically from the old system. In the latter, labour is bound and production has a feudal character. In the modern system, labour is free and production is capitalistic; it is governed by the idea of "rational efficiency in the interests of maximum production" (ibid., 139), and its labour force is a reservoir of available energy with each worker representing one unit of energy rather than being regarded as a whole person. Workers' basic economic and social needs are significant only in so far as they are also the needs of the productive system. Its major concern is keeping wages low by continuously creating a large supply of labour. For this reason, impersonal relations between workers and owners is characteristic of the new-style or modern plantation system, while the opposite is the case under the old plantation system. According to Wolf, this difference is due to the nature of surplus accumulation. Under the old system "part of the surplus produced is used to cover the subsistence needs of the labour force" as a means

"to maintain and augment the supply of labour", while under the modern system "the fate of its labour force is of no concern to it as long as enough workers are available to do the necessary work" (ibid., 128). In other words, under the modern plantation system, capital surplus accumulation is not constrained by the condition of labour as long as enough workers are available. Therefore Wolf seems to attribute the difference between the two types to the shortage of labour or capital. Thus under the old system, the mechanism through which the labour force is controlled is in some direct form, such as under the tenancy system (see Chapter Five), even if this involves some sacrifice of the surplus by the planters. On the other hand, this is not necessary under the modern system due to the ample supply of labour, thus leaving the plantation "single minded in its pursuit of profit".

I will show that in St. Kitts this was not the case. Under the old plantation system, the bound nature of the labour force under the tenancy system was not caused by a shortage of labour, but was an attempt to ensure the least costly possible supply of labour and the maximum accumulation of surplus, rather than being a process of cutting some of the surplus accumulation in order to ensure a labour supply. Under the modern plantation system, this equation was achieved by cutting the cost of production through the application of technological innovation made possible by the surplus accumulated under the old system. These two socio-economic formations (the old and modern plantation systems) are different aspects of the same mode of production, which was aimed at surplus accumulation by the capitalists and was accompanied by the impoverishment of the working class through a colonial relationship. For this reason one often finds the bound labour aspect of the old plantation

system under the modern system. For example, while St. Kitts is at present characterized as a modern plantation system, the estates sector still exhibits features of the old system. Labour is still bound to some extent. For instance, many workers pay rent to the estates and are heavily indebted to them, while at the same time they cultivate marginal estate land for their own provisions (which are needed to supplement wages and to meet their subsistence needs; see Chapter Four).

Some of the modern characteristics were already evident in the St. Kitts mode of plantation production during the third quarter of the 19th Century, when the tenancy system was progressively eliminated due to the increasing use for sugar cane cultivation of land which was formerly allotted to workers for food production. At the same time, the plantation system was undergoing the modernization of its sugar mills through the application of new technology, in an effort to cut costs and meet the growing competition of European beet sugar. Workers therefore had to rely to a growing extent upon their wages (see Chapter Three).

In conclusion, these different modes of plantation production reflect the development of the same forces of production, the corresponding labour activities, and surplus appropriations by the capitalists. In other words, as the productive force developed, there was an increasing separation of labour from the means of production, coupled with growing rigidity in class relationships (based on property) with workers becoming mere objects of production, and the capitalists owning and controlling the means of production.

Definition of the old plantation system: Between 1834 and 1911, this type developed out of the slave plantation system as a result of the changing trade relationship between Britain and the sugar colonies; this

resulted in the Emancipation of slaves and the formation of a "free" labour force. This trading relationship was based on a highly protected monopoly guarding both the interests of the colonies and the British sugar merchants and refineries. But as a result of world-wide trading and her accumulation of capital, Britain favoured freer trade, and abolished the sugar colonies' protection, thus stimulating them to compete by producing raw sugar at a lower cost. But the severity of competition from Continental beet sugar and lower production costs in French colonies brought crisis both to the British sugar refineries and to St. Kitts and other British West Indian sugar producers, and it was this crisis which led to the transformation of the old into the modern plantation system.

As an organization of production, the old plantation system was characterized by the combination into a single operating unit of both mills and estates; the decentralized nature of the industry brought all these individual units of production into competition with each other. Moreover, labour was tightly bound into a community around each unit of production, through a tenancy-wages dependence upon the landlord-capitalists.

Definition of the modern plantation system: Between 1912 and 1967 the modern plantation system developed out of the old one. It involved, above all, the establishment of a centralized sugar factory and a central labour union, and the application of modern technology to the means of production. It resulted from the inability of the old plantation system to produce sugar in larger quantities at lower prices, during a period of world-wide expansion in sugar production and declining sugar prices, as well as a changing trade relationship between Britain and the sugar colonies. As an organization of production, the modern plantation system is characterized by a separation both in ownership and location of the field

and factory enterprises. At the same time, the sugar industry is organized into a highly integrated whole with the emphasis on technology. The workers are organized in a union; wage relations and a collective bargaining process dominate the relationship between owners and workers.

Chapter Three of this thesis provides a historical background to the modern plantation system in St. Kitts which is studied in the rest of the thesis, but an analytical distinction between the different stages in its socio-economic formation will be made here. There have already been three major changes, and a fourth one is under way at the present time.

The first occurred in 1834, and concerned changes in the social-economic organization following Emancipation. This marked the end of the period of "primitive accumulation" of capital through the expansion of colonial markets, and led to rapid growth in the production of sugar. As a result of this, demand rose and sugar became an item of daily consumption in England rather than a luxurious commodity, which stimulated temporary overproduction and brought down prices until by 1830 they had fallen below the cost of production. Planters' and merchants' protectionist doctrines brought about their own crisis. They came under increasing attack by the liberal anti-monopolist sector of industrial capitalists, and had completely outlived their usefulness by 1830. The difficulties constituted great pressure to change the production system, particularly to amalgamate the many small estates into larger units. But a preoccupation with slave control obscured and even discouraged these economic necessities. At that time the purchase and maintenance of slaves was the highest of all production costs, and eventually it proved less costly and problematic to end the slavery system altogether. However,

as will be seen below, the liberal policy of free trade was itself based upon a monopoly of private property by a minority class, and would therefore inevitably lead to further monopoly.

The second major change concerned the alteration in the organization of production which the establishment of the old plantation system involved. This occurred during the late 1830's and early 1840's, as a response to the scarcity of capital brought on by the commercial crisis in England and the declining importance to British investors of sugar (especially in the Leeward Islands where production is on a small scale compared to Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana) in comparison with the attraction of investing in such areas as cotton and railways at home and in North America (and later in India and Egypt).

The third change also concerned the organization of plantation production, with the establishment of the centralized sugar factory at Basseterre in 1912, this being the basis of the development of the modern plantation system. This change was an attempt to cut production costs by technological adaptations, in response to the 1890's crisis. Under the modern system, the increasing concentration of fixed capital (necessitated by the application of technology) brought workers into growing competition, both with machinery and with each other (as modernization reduced the number of available jobs) creating a downward pressure on wages. The concentration of many workers in the sugar Factory added to the consequent awareness of all St. Kitts workers of the need to organize in order to defend as a class their wages and job security. Between 1930 and the 1940's, the intense struggle (through a series of strikes) between the St. Kitts-Nevis Trades and Labour Union and the sugar industry was transformed into a political struggle against colonial rule, leading

to universal enfranchisement, the formation of the Associated States in 1967, and the end of direct colonial rule.

The fourth change is going on at the present time, and consists of what I would call an "economic emancipation" struggle. It is an attempt to abolish the wage system and create a new society based on the collective ownership of the means of production, as exemplified in the increasing demand for nationalization of the sugar industry and the passage of the Sugar Industry Advisory Board Act in 1970. I will show that the wage system under the modern plantation system is causing a crisis due to the increasing numbers of workers who are finding alternative means of livelihood, resulting in a growing shortage of workers available to the sugar industry (especially in the estates sector) and the corresponding decline of sugar production (as evidenced by the fact that the "guaranteed" quota has not been met in recent years). It is a discussion of this fourth change which will provide the major part of this thesis.

C. Plan of the thesis

The organization of the thesis follows the order of the changes outlined above. Part One will be concerned with background material: Chapter Two will describe the geography and population of contemporary St. Kitts, and Chapter Three will examine the history of the modern plantation system by describing the development of slave plantations and the old plantation system.

Part Two will describe the organization of production in the modern plantation system of St. Kitts, and will show how the present economic and social crisis can be understood in terms of the conflicts between the feudal aspects of the estates sector and the capitalist fea-

tures of the system as a whole. In this context, Chapter Four will describe the sugar Factory organization and operation, and demonstrate the characteristics and changing technology of the modern colonial organization of production under the control of British capitalists. Chapter Five will describe the organization and operations of the estates sector, and will demonstrate its dependence upon the Factory, its inability to recruit workers, and the limited nature of technological and organizational changes.

Part Three is concerned with the wider society and politics of St. Kitts in the context of the conflicts embodied in the modern plantation system. Chapter Six will describe the development of the working class through struggle, and the rise of proletarian consciousness. Chapter Seven will describe social class and politics, indicating recent shifts in the labour force and occupational structure, and the rise of the People's Action Movement as the official opposition to the Labour Government, as a result of the effects of emigration and the changing class structure in St. Kitts. This is followed by Chapter Eight which will describe the community organization, household composition and changing interpersonal relations in the selected villages of Phillips and Molyneux, their links with the plantation system's conflicts being apparent through their increasing independence from the estates.

Part Four is a conclusion. Chapter Nine examines the plantation mode of production and its types in the light of the case of St. Kitts and other examples, and at the same time will examine the plantation as a non-viable organization of production in an emerging nation state.

CHAPTER TWO
PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY
OF CONTEMPORARY ST. KITTS

In this chapter I will first describe the topography, climate and soil use, and the native flora and fauna of the island. Then I will give a brief description of settlement patterns and demographic features of St. Kitts.

A. Physical geography

St. Kitts is the main island of the St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla Associated States in the northern Lesser Antilles (the Leeward Islands). St. Kitts lies between latitudes $17\frac{1}{2}$ and 17° N; 7 miles North-West of St. Kitts is the small Dutch island of Statia, and Nevis lies 2 miles to the South-East.

(1) Topography. St. Kitts is 19 miles long and 5 miles wide, and is shaped like a chicken drum-stick, covering 68 square miles (see Figure 1). The island is mountainous, and approaching it in a plane one is impressed by the physical setting. First of all there is a Northern range which is dominated by Mount Misery (3,700 ft.); next, the highest peaks in the Middle and Southern groups of mountains are Verchild's Mountain (3,000 ft.) and Olivees Range (2,800 ft.) respectively. These three form a broken spine-line ridge running from North-West to South-East, and are the result of three main sets of volcanic activity which occurred some 20,000 years ago. From the Southern part of the main ridge, and stretching towards the South-East, lies a broken range of low hills comprising Canada Hills, Conaree Hills and Morne Hills, which are about 950 ft. high and are the remains of much older volcanoes than those of the main chain. The mountainous part of St. Kitts runs Southwards through

a narrow peninsula, and ends in a wide triangular knob which is scattered with peaks of up to 1,100 ft.. Among the peaks there is a large salt lake known as Salt Pond.

The next thing one notices are the green, neat cane fields that surround the entire island from the coastline to about 1,000 ft. up the gentle slopes, and the clusters of palm trees or buildings in the villages or towns, with the ruins of old windmills and steam-mill towers in the background. Since St. Kitts is a volcanic island, ghauts or gullies radiate from each of the ranges to the sea. During the rainy season, floods often occur on the low lands, but there is no river, as these ghauts are not usually deep (except Wingfield Gut which reaches to the sea) and are normally either dry or contain underground streams only. The land along the ghauts is not suitable for the cultivation of cane, and in the past has been used by workers both for house-spots and for growing personal provisions. However, these areas are often damp and unhealthy, and floods are frequent. Since 1950 the Government has tried to develop new settlements away from these ghaut areas.

(2) Climate and soils. St. Kitts is located in the path of the moisture-bearing North-East Trade Winds which are crucial for the cultivation of sugar cane. Rainfall in the island is more consistent than it is in either Nevis or Antigua (see Figure 2), but there are nevertheless considerable fluctuations both from year to year, and among the various locations according to altitude:-

There is a continuously wet zone (i.e. with no dry months at all) which has a total annual rainfall of over 80 ins. and extends down to the 700 ft. level. This zone is not suitable for the cultivation of sugar cane, which requires a dry period for ripening; moreover, harves-

RAINFALL OF ST. KITTS

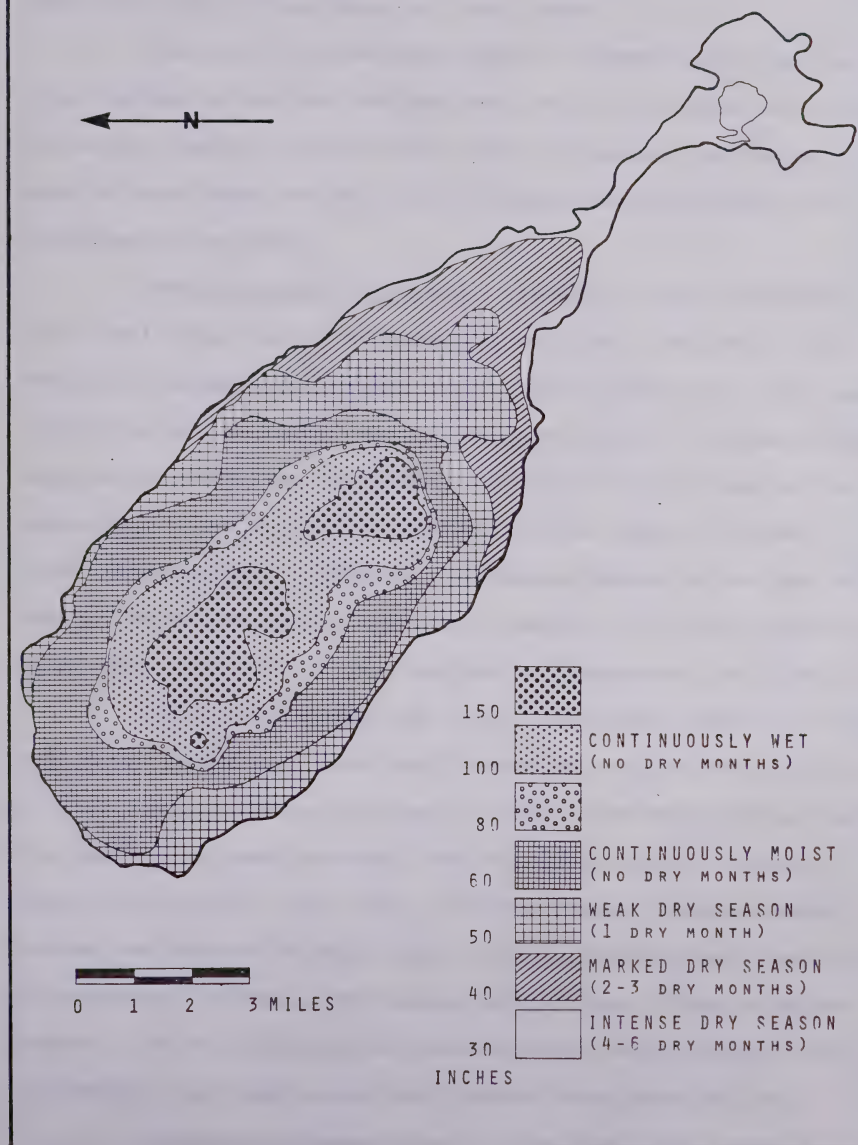


FIGURE 2

ting with tractors or mechanical loaders requires a relatively dry terrain. This zone is mostly covered with mountain rain forest and above 1,000 ft., where high winds prevail, there is a palm forest.

There are a few scattered strips of cleared land between the lower boarders of this zone and the upper limits of the sugar cane cultivation, and these are used by estate workers for growing provisions. The peaks of Mount Misery and the Verchild Mountain are covered with rain clouds most of the time.

The continuously moist zone (i.e. again, with no dry months), has a total annual rainfall of between 60 to 80 ins., and land in this zone lies between the 700 ft. and 200 ft. levels. Here most of the sugar cane estates of the North-Western district are located; in spite of there being no dry months here, the estates are able to cultivate some of the highest yields per acre, due to the highly porous nature of the soil which compensates for the wetness. The estates located in this zone are: Lodge, Wingfield, Molyneux, Cranstouns & Lavallee, Sir Gillies, Lamberts, Brothersons, Stone Fort, Ottleys, and part of Cappesterre (see Figure 3).

The weak dry-season zone, with a total annual rainfall of between 50 ins. and 60 ins., lies along the coastal areas at altitudes below 200 ft., forming a narrow belt around the base of the main mountain chains. This zone is also ideal for sugar cane cultivation, and the following estates are located in these areas: Willets, Belmont, Mansion, Caines, Bourkes, Con Phipps & The Walk, Farm, Stapleton, Douglas, West Farm, part of Cappesterre, Greenhill, New Guinea, and Chalk Farm. Those which are located in the continuously moist zone and in this one are known as the "wet estates", and yield as much as 57 tons of sugar cane per acre.

The marked dry-season zone (i.e. dry from 2 to 4 months) has a total annual rainfall of between 40 ins. and 55 ins., and covers the areas

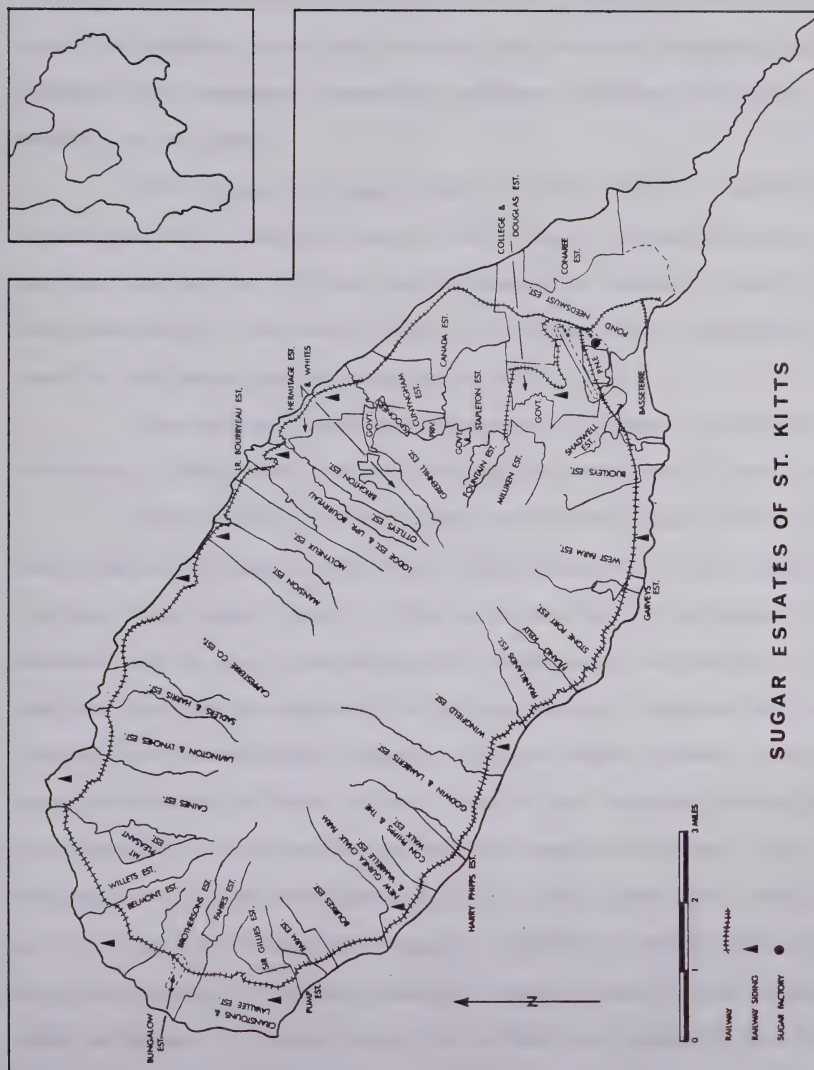


FIGURE 3

of the low range hills (including the capital city of Basseterre and extending Westward to the West Farm estates). The rainfall in this zone is very erratic and sugar cultivation here is in danger of drought every year. The estates located in this zone are: Fountain, Brighton, Shadwell, College, Pond, Needsmust, Bourryeau, Buckleys, Cunyngham, Hermitage, Conaree, and Milliken.

The intense dry-season zone (i.e. dry from 4 to 6 months), with a total rainfall of about 40 ins. or less, is not very suitable for sugar cane cultivation, and only one estate (Canada) is currently growing any cane there at all - and very little at that; out of over 1,200 acres, less than 100 were under cane cultivation in 1969.

The estates located in the marked and intense dry-season zones are known as "dry estates" with an average yield of about 20 tons per acre.

In St. Kitts, the dry season lasts from January to July and is also known as the sugar cane harvest time, usually the busiest time of the year in the sugar industry. The wet season lasts from August to December, and is also known as the dull season since the Factory is closed down and the estates operate with a minimum number of workers (who usually work only two or three days a week). As noted above, however, the dry season varies with altitude and area, and is also affected by droughts. Hurricanes are usually experienced between August and October (i.e. in the wet season) but there have been none in St. Kitts since 1928, when crops and buildings were extensively damaged. Rainfall is usually very heavy and steady during this period, sometimes lasting several days, damaging roads and crops. In recent years, the harvest has frequently been prolonged into August; during my field work I was constantly being informed (and was able to observe for myself) that the work was frequently inter-

rupted by excessively wet weather, sometimes for several days. Under such conditions, the sugar cane stalk tends to shoot up quite rapidly, and this reduces the cane's sucrose content; it ordinarily takes about 8.6 tons of cane to make 1 ton of sugar, but in this weather it takes over 9 tons. Both the total amount of rain and micro-environmental variations therefore influence cane yield, causing a great deal of fluctuation in the cane crop. In both 1968 and 1969 (i.e. during field work) there was drought in St. Kitts. (According to several estate owners, attorneys and managers, a total average rainfall of less than 40 to 45 ins. is considered a drought, since this can prematurely stop cane growth, thus both cane stalk height and sucrose content are adversely affected).

The average temperature on St. Kitts is 80°F, and it seldom exceeds 90° or falls below 65°; it varies with elevation. The salt air is often warm and humid, and is uncomfortable around mid-day, but as the sun goes down breezes from the Trade Winds make one feel very comfortable and lead most of the villagers to cluster outside their houses to take advantage of the cooler air and enjoy their daily routine of visiting friends. January is the coldest month, with a mean temperature of 75°, while July is the warmest, with a mean temperature of 82°.

The interaction of climate, vegetation, topography and time has produced different types of soil out of the volcanic parent material (see Figure 4). There are three major types of soil in St. Kitts: (a) fresh, unaltered, loose fragmental volcanic rocks - lithosol; (b) partly-weathered, loose fragmental rocks - brown earth soil (from coarse agglomerates) and yellow earth soil (from fine-grained ash, etc.); and (c) well-weathered, cemented fragmental rocks - shoal soil.

Both climate and the distribution of vegetation is characterized

SOILS OF ST. KITTS



FIGURE 4

by concentric zonation around the main mountain chains, and the topography is similarly fashioned, first the flat and smooth narrow belts, gradually becoming steeper and more rugged, until above 1,000 ft. it is very steep. Lithosol is most widespread in St. Kitts and covers over 70% of the island; at most of the estates, sugar cane cultivation is carried out on this kind of soil. Shoal soil is the next most widespread. It is a heavy clay soil caused by the long process of weathering, thus it is slippery when wet and hard when dry, making it very difficult to cultivate; this soil covers much of the South-Eastern section of St. Kitts where cane is not cultivated. The distribution of brown earth and yellow earth is limited. Most of the former covers the mountainous areas of over 1,000 ft., while the latter occurs with lithosol in the Southern hilly part of St. Kitts, where the Olivees Range is situated. Lithosol and yellow earth soil are the two most important soils for the cultivation of sugar cane (unlike Nevis where lithosol is distributed in more limited areas compared to shoal). Cane areas therefore cover the continuously moist zone, weak and marked dry-season rainfall zones, an elevation of below 1,000 ft. (usually less than 700 ft.), and areas of lithosol and yellow earth soil.

These two soils, which are of more recent formation than is shoal, seem to have been reasonably fertile for sugar cane in St. Kitts, even after over three hundred years of extensive cultivation, and in fact are apparently ideal for such a crop. When, around 1850 and after almost two hundred years of slave-based cane cultivation, St. Kitts planters began to introduce mechanized implements to offset the withdrawal of labour from estates, they were not hampered by rocks in the soil as was the case in Nevis. This does not mean that St. Kitts had no problems of rocks in the soil. Both lithosol and yellow earth soil contain a good

deal of stones and boulders which hinder mechanized agricultural operations. (One estate owner decided to remove stones, and it took over two years to clear the land). Stone walls seem to have been built in St. Kitts since the 18th Century (as is suggested by the extent of weathering) yet are lower than Nevis walls which suggests that St. Kitts has been the least troubled of the two. Furthermore, the character of the soil was such that the cultivation of sugar cane was less costly, which delayed the trend to mechanization and encouraged a heavy reliance upon labour-intensive methods of cultivation. Francis Watts, who carried out a study of the two major sugar-producing Leeward Islands (St. Kitts and Antigua), stated in his "Report on the Sugar Industry in Antigua and St. Kitts-Nevis, 1881 - 1905"

...cultivation in the cane is carried on more cheaply in St. Kitts than in Antigua, in consequence almost entirely of difference in the character of the soil of the two islands - the soil of St. Kitts being sandy and easily worked, while that of Antigua is as a rule heavy and more costly to handle - coupled with the fact that the rainfall in St. Kitts is greater than the rainfall of Antigua, there has been less effort in St. Kitts to introduce sugar making machinery of vacuum pan. With the exception of one small factory, which has a vacuum pan, but no triple effect, the muscovado process is followed throughout. (Great Britain, 1906:13).

During the latter half of the 19th Century, St. Kitts planters shifted to the B147 variety of cane, which was ideal for St. Kitts soil where shallow, widespreading roots helped the cane to resist the wind and support the height of the growing stalk. This was accompanied by the fertilizing practice of applying a green dressing (see Chapter Three). Potatoes were also often grown before planting cane, frequently mixed in with pigeon peas, for their underground growth loosens up the subsoil and makes it more suitable for sugar cane planting. This practice is still carried

out by estates in St. Kitts, but due to the shortage of labour is being increasingly abandoned; tractors are relied upon for soil preparation, and chemical fertilizers are now used. Parker's Report (1969) shows that in 1968 an average of \$39 in Eastern Caribbean currency* was spent on fertilizers per acre of cane reaped. This is just over 10% of the total cost per acre of cane production (which was \$377, including \$201 for the cost of labour, \$43 for salaries, \$6 for interest on working capital - usually advanced by banks or the Agency companies, and \$88 for other charges). Fertilizer use is therefore on the increase in spite of the very fertile soils enjoyed by St. Kitts estates. The increased use of both chemical fertilizers and green dressing was partly due to an increasing knowledge of soil conservation. However, St. Kitts' soil is on the whole mis-used in this respect. This is partly due to the shortage of estate workers, but more important to the plantation system of agricultural production. Workers have no understanding of soil conservation in the way that peasants or farmers who own their land do, and even if they did they would simply not be allowed to put it into practice. Owners and attorneys or managers are not concerned about soil conservation, since it would increase production costs and they are more interested in the size of profits; attorneys and managers receive a bonus in addition to their basic salaries, the amount of which is determined by the size of profits. As a rule, therefore, conservation work is not done, beyond some repair of damage. For example, when I enquired why preventative work had not been carried out on one section of cane land which had caved in as a result of heavy rain (several acres of cane and land being lost),

*E. C. currency \$1 = U. S. \$0.56. I will use the \$ sign throughout this thesis to denote Eastern Caribbean currency.

I was told that the owner was "not interested in prevention but in profit". Soil erosion is extensive under the St. Kitts plantation system, due to the intensive exploitation of the soil. After more than three hundred years of intensive sugar cane cultivation, the fertility and conservation of the topsoil is remarkably good in view of the extensive soil abuse, poor irrigation and the lack of conservation techniques. This can be explained mainly by the peculiarities of cane itself, and in more recent years to an extensive use of chemical fertilizers, particularly nitrogen and potash. Once a field is cleared and the cane has been planted, the ratoon or subsequent growth of cane shoots make it unnecessary to prepare the soil for planting for another ten to sixteen years; the soil is not disturbed as it would have to be in temperate climate agriculture. After the cane is cut, the top section (with its low sucrose content) is usually left covering the field, thus preventing wind and rain from removing the topsoil.

In summary, the organization of production of the St. Kitts plantation system has involved an extensive exploitation of land to produce a surplus for the landowners and capitalists. Since St. Kitts is endowed with rich and fertile soil, there has been no necessity to undertake extensive soil conservation, except to remedy damage caused by the resulting abuse. Even the soil conservation practised in the latter half of the 19th Century can be seen to have resulted from the pressure to cut costs by intensifying land use due to economic difficulties.

(3) Native flora and fauna. The areas of St. Kitts described above have been under sugar cultivation for so long that the basic native vegetation is very restricted, much of it having been disturbed by either man or nature (for example, high winds or hurricanes prevent the growth

of tall trees).

Undisturbed rainforest is therefore rare, and even some of the timber at high elevations (above 1,600 ft.) is considered to be secondary growth. Gumlin trees (Dacryodes excelsa) which are 90 to 110 ft. high cover about 40% of what rainforest there is; about 30% is made up of cabbage palm (Euterpe globosa), while the remainder consists of guana sweetwood (Aniba bracterata) and another species of burrwood (Sloanea).

Below the rainforest and above the cane land, secondary forest is widespread and contains more varieties of vegetation. Tree fern (Cynthea arborea) is common, and it usually takes over any provision grounds abandoned by workers. The trumpet tree (Cecropia peltata) is even more widespread than the tree fern, and reaches heights of 40 to 60 ft. Other varieties include such trees as white cedar (Tabebuia pallida), red cedar (Cedrela Mexicana) and locust (Hymenaea Cabrail).

On the peninsular of St. Kitts, Acacia and Cassia with seaside grape (Coccolobis urifera) predominate in the low, arid areas, and the dry, rocky hill masses are covered with various cacti (Opuntia tuna, Cereus insularis and Melocactus communis).

With regard to fauna, the ecological balance of St. Kitts was upset by the introduction in the late 19th Century of the mongoose (Herpestes a auropunctatus) from Jamaica, which the planters used to control snakes and rats in the cane fields (Merrill, 1958:36). The Mongoose brought about the extinction of many species of mammals, reptiles and birds (those which lay eggs on the ground). As a result, insect control through birds is non-existent, and pesticides have become the only means of controlling them, although once a crop disease starts or insects begin to multiply, the whole island suffers. Due to the mongoose,

St. Kitts is now unable to grow any vegetables without incurring a high risk of insect damage. Moreover, the villagers' chickens are also depleted by them. In recent years, the Government has been awarding \$5 for each mongoose caught.

B. Cultural geography

There are 41,851 acres of land in St. Kitts, of which 29,295 are cultivable (75%), being distributed as follows:

Table 2.1
Distribution of cultivable land

<u>Elevation</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Above 1,000 ft.	1,062
Above 500 ft.	7,967
Above 250 ft.	5,124
Below 250 ft.	15,142

(Source: Bookers' Report, 1968)

However, at present just over 12,000 acres are under cultivation of sugar cane by 40 privately-owned estates (who own about 28,000 acres) and by three Government-owned estates.

(1) Settlement. St. Kitts is composed of nine parishes: St. Paul Cappesterre, St. John Cappesterre, Ste. Anne Sandy Point, Christ Church Nicholas Town, St. Thomas Middle Island, Ste. Mary Cayon, Trinity Palmetto Points, St. Peter Basseterre, and St. George Basseterre (see Figure 1). The capital city, Basseterre, has a population of approximately 15,000 people, but the rest of the population is settled in towns and villages, and on estate land along ghauts in the countryside. There are several towns: Cayon, Sandy Point, Old Road and Dieppe Bay, and St. Thomas are all old towns dating back to the early settlement period of the 17th Century and still retain English and French names. Some villages, such as St. Paul and Saddlers, were created after Emancipation as settlements of

freed slaves ("independent villages"), and others are either of rather recent origin, built since 1952, or are old and located in plantation "bush" land - i.e. on the upper slopes or in gullies between mountain ridges.

Molyneux and Phillips villages, where I carried out the household census, are examples of recent and old "bush" villages respectively. Molyneux (see Figure 5), where I lived during the period of fieldwork, was created in 1954 by the Government Housing Authority, and it is situated in an area which was originally Molyneux Estate cane land. The village streets run at right angles to each other, and there are 130 households. Phillips (see Figure 6) is located above Molyneux (between the ridges of Mount Misery), and contains 140 households of which 97 are occupied at present (see Chapters Seven and Eight). The houses are scattered and the village is divided by a small ghaut which runs during the heavy rainy season. Although these two villages are separate units, they are connected in many ways. The road leading to Phillips from Molyneux runs parallel to the ghaut from Mount Misery and there are houses along both sides of the ghaut; this area is known as Stone Haven. Furthermore, Molyneux villagers originated in Phillips, and therefore many families have relatives in the upper village. Both villages are surrounded by the Molyneux Estate cane fields. The Manager's residence (surrounded by gardens and groves) is near to the village, but is approached by a separate road. The estate yard is located in the upper section of the estate, where the junior overseer resides, and where all production equipment is stationed (originally used as work-horse stables). The senior overseer resides about two miles away in the lower section, close to the ocean and along the main road leading to Mansion village (originally this was the

MOLYNEUX VILLAGE

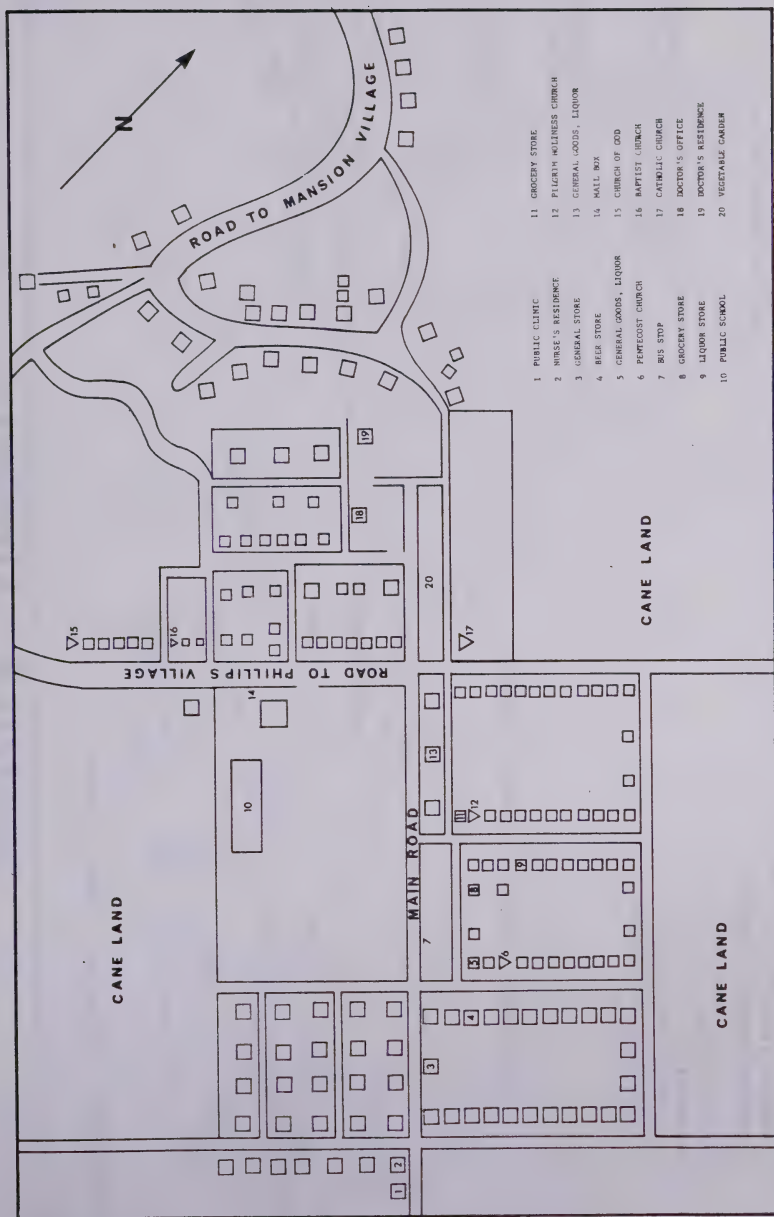


FIGURE 5

PHILLIPS VILLAGE

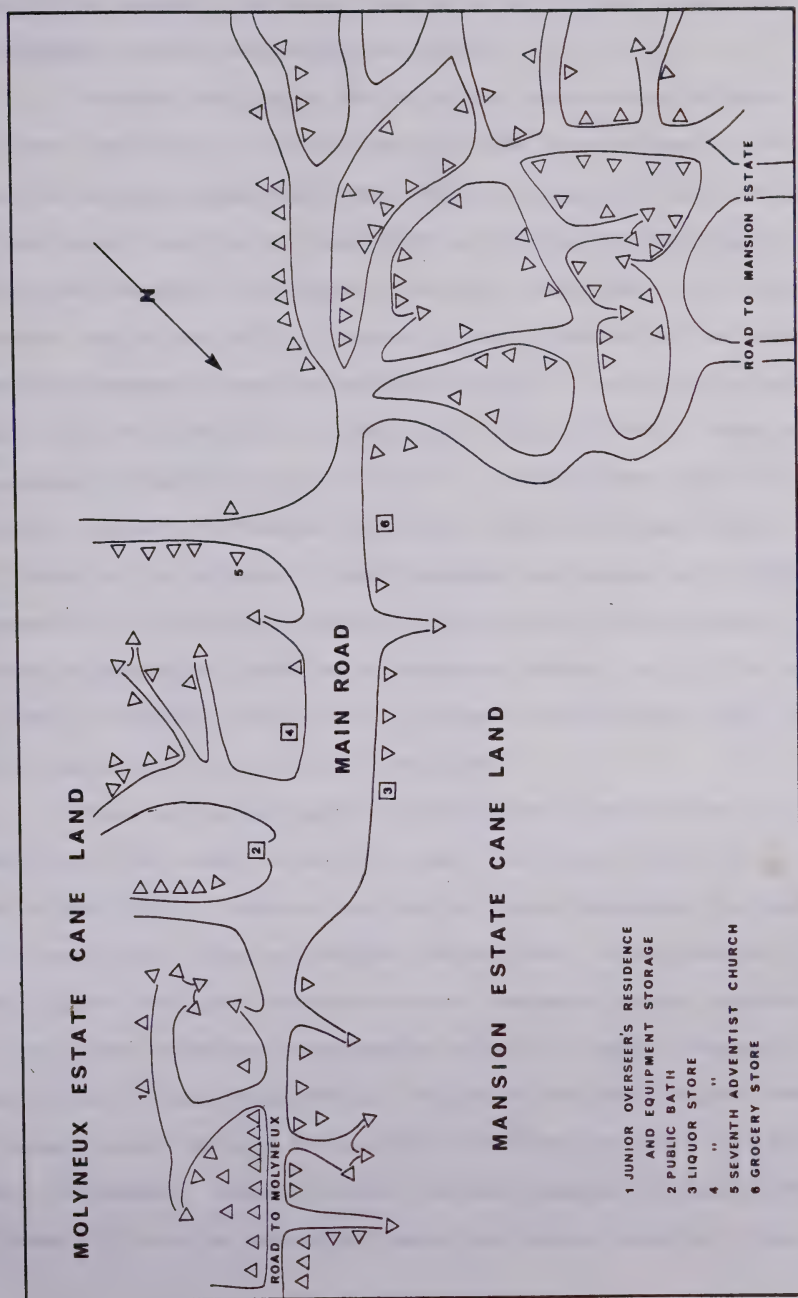


FIGURE 8

Mills Estate manager's residence; this estate and Phillips estate were incorporated into Molyneux during the 1890's).

The main road circles the island and connects many villages and towns (see Figure 1), and is paved with both stone and asphalt. Frequent bus services connect Basseterre with the villages and towns at a 5¢ per mile rate. St. Kitts is linked with the outside world by means of air and sea transport; the airport is located in Basseterre. Air travel to Nevis, Antigua and the U. S. Virgin Islands is provided by the Leeward Island Air Transport (owned and operated by B.O.A.C.) and a regular government and private boat service connects St. Kitts with Nevis. There are no passenger steamship services between St. Kitts and North America or Britain at present; the Federal Boat Service (under joint ownership of the former British Caribbean islands) operates from Jamaica and Trinidad. International telephone and telegraph is handled by a British company located in Basseterre. There was no television station in St. Kitts at the time of fieldwork, and there is a Government radio station which broadcasts local news, V.O.A. and B.B.C. world news.

There is a modern hospital in Basseterre, a smaller one in Sandy Point (with rather limited facilities) and a Leper Colony at the edge of Sandy Point. There are nine health clinics throughout the island, one in each parish, which are staffed with midwives. Foreign medical practitioners work either privately or with Government support; estates also enter into contractual arrangements to provide blanket coverage of their workers' medical requirements. The doctor from Hong Kong who resides in Molyneux covers the area between Cayon and Dieppe Bay, which includes over 8,000 persons. According to him, the most prominent illnesses among villagers fall into two categories: among older people (especially cane

workers) there are nervous disorders due to extremely hard physical work; among young people there are stomach ailments (especially from food poisoning) and venereal disease.

(2) Population. According to the 1960 Census (1970 Census figures are not yet available), the population of the Associated States of St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla was 56,224, the respective figures being 37,028, 13,039 and 6,157.

Table 2.2
St. Kitts Population

Year	Migration Balance	Emigration Rate	Growth Rate %	Population Estimate
1960	- 1,479	2.5	0.7	56,224
1961	- 1,210	2.0	0.2	56,341
1962	- 1,089	1.8	0.7	56,777
1963	- 1,405	2.2	0.1	56,828
1964	- 574	0.9	0.2	57,416
1965	- 1,128	1.8	0.2	57,519
1966	- 1,152	1.8	-	57,617
1967	- 2,800	1.6	0.4	55,874

(Source: St. Kitts Government, 1969-73)

However, the Digest of Statistics No. 2 (Ministry of Finance Trade and Tourism, 1968) showed the end of 1966 total to be 57,617, representing an average annual increase of about 0.4%. Since the natural rate of increase is estimated at about 2% (see Table 2.3 below), this low rate could be explained partly by the heavy rate of emigration to Britain, and more recently to the U. S. Virgin Islands. From 1960 to 1967, a total of 10,837 people left the State, consisting of about 18% of the total population. Emigration was especially heavy in 1967 due to political disturbances (see Chapter Eight).

Table 2.3
Natural Increase in Population
St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla

Year	Births	Deaths	Natural Increase	Growth Rate %	Population Estimate
1960	1,594	584	1,010	1.8	57,703
1961	2,038	711	1,327	2.2	59,030
1962	2,112	587	1,525	2.5	60,555
1963	2,025	569	1,456	2.3	62,011
1964	1,907	545	1,362	2.1	63,373
1965	1,860	557	1,303	2.0	64,676
1966	1,723	545	1,187	1.8	65,854
1967	1,502	445	1,057	1.5	66,911

(Source: St. Kitts Government, 1969-73)

By 1967, the population was estimated to have fallen to 55,874. The heavy rate of emigration affected the age distribution, particularly the proportion of 20 to 35 year olds from which the estates sector work force is drawn (see Tables 8.1 and 8.2 for Molyneux and Phillips figures). However, emigration to Britain has been closed since 1962, while in the case of the U. S. Virgin Islands it is reaching a point where the authorities are gradually closing the gate. During the fieldwork period, some Kittitians returned from there, having been rounded up by the U. S. authorities and deported. (The U. S. immigration authorities usually issue thirty-day visitors' visas. When the "visitors" are employed by the tourist/construction industry they are given work permits through the Labour Department and temporary entry visas are issued. This provides a cheap labour supply while needed, and workers are simply deported when a boom passes.)

The estimated population increase of 2% per annum and a current population density of 422 persons per square mile (cf. 454 in 1891, 438 in 1901, 387 in 1911 and 330 in 1921: St. Kitts Government, 1921) makes St.

Kitts one of the most densely populated states in the world. This reflects the historical problem of the plantation system which requires the concentration of a large number of workers in a small area. By Emancipation in 1834 there was a white population of a little over 1,612, 3,065 non-field slaves, 12,600 field slaves, 3,200 slave children under 6 years old, and 915 aged and infirm slaves, making a total of 19,780 black people (Augier et al, 1967:183). The size of the working population (including individuals of 7 years and over) was therefore 15,665 in 1834; the 1960 Census indicated that the working age population (now including only individuals of 14 years and over) was 21,736 (11,923 women and 9,813 men), and it has been estimated that from 1964 to 1968 the working population increased from 18,276 to 20,328 in spite of very heavy emigration.

Table 2.4
Estimated Labour Force
St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla

Year	Employed	%	Unemployed	%	Total	% of the total population
1964	17,540	96.0	736	4.0	18,276	30.5
1965	17,505	96.2	700	3.8	18,205	30.4
1966	17,847	94.4	1,052	5.6	18,899	31.0
1967	18,189	92.7	1,429	7.3	19,618	32.5
1968	18,531	91.1	1,797	8.9	20,328	32.0
1969	18,873	89.6	2,189	10.4	21,062	32.5
1970	19,215	88.1	2,594	11.9	21,809	32.9
1971	19,328	87.7	2,725	12.3	22,053	33.0
1972	19,441	87.2	2,857	12.8	22,298	33.2
1973	19,554	86.7	2,991	13.3	22,545	33.3
1974	19,667	86.3	3,109	13.7	22,776	33.0

(Source: St. Kitts Government:1969-73)

In short, in spite of the change in the minimum working age from 7 to 14 years, the size of the working population has not changed drastically since Emancipation. As will be seen later, unemployment and emigration are two of the major problems which confront St. Kitts as a result of the development of the modern plantation system and the increasingly heavy emphasis on the use of machinery instead of men. The 1960 Census indicated that a total of 1,007 people (475 men and 532 women) were unemployed (about 5%) compared with 21,736 employed. Due to the frequency of emigration and the seasonal nature of employment, the exact figures are hard to ascertain, but unemployment was conservatively estimated at about 9% in 1968 and it is estimated that this figure will increase very rapidly over the next few years (see Table 2.4 above).

The prediction that the working-age population of St. Kitts will experience increasing difficulty in finding work is not difficult to understand when one considers that in 1967 over 30,000 (54.5%) out of the 55,874 total for St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla were under 20 years of age, and that more than 12,000 (22%) were between 20 and 40 years of age. In other words, the recent increase in population growth has included a rise in the amount of the population at working age, in spite of the heavy emigration (see Table 2.5 below). In 1969 the sugar industry employed a total of 4,400 workers, 800 of them in the Factory and 3,600 in the estates sector, as compared with a total number of employed of 20,328. This is indeed a drastic reduction of workers (cf. 12,600 field slaves in 1834 and 10,870 agricultural workers in 1921), due mainly to changes in the organization of production, especially the heavy emphasis on the application of technology. My census of Molyneux and Phillips indicated that the bulk of estate workers were over 50 years of age. Under these circumstances,

increasing numbers of people have migrated from the villages to Basseterre and abroad in search of work. According to the 1960 Census, more than 15,579 out of 37,028 people lived in Basseterre (cf. 8,159 in 1911 and 2,644 in 1921), and it is now estimated that Basseterre's inhabitants number about 20,000; that means over half St. Kitts' population lives in the capital city.

Table 2.6
St. Kitts Population Distribution

	<u>Population in 1960 Census</u>
Basseterre	15,579
<u>Leeward parishes</u>	
St. Paul (villages: Newton Ground, St. Paul) . .	2,278
Ste. Anne (town Sandy Point)	3,648
St. Thomas (town: Old Road; village: Middle Island)	2,529
Trinity (villages: Challengers, Trinity, Boyd) . .	1,184
St. George Rural (Basseterre outskirts). . . .	614
	<hr/> 10,253
<u>Windward Parishes</u>	
Christchurch (villages: Mansion, Molyneux, Phillips. Town: Nicholas).	2,248
St. John (villages: Harris, Parsons Ground, Saddlers, Tabernacle. Town: Dieppe Bay) . . .	4,152
St. Peter (villages: Stapleton, St. Peter). . .	2,306
Ste. Mary (villages: Cayon, Lodge, Ottleys, Reys, Bayfords).	3,575
	<hr/> 12,281
TOTAL	<hr/> 38,113

(Source: St. Kitts Government, 1960)

The racial composition of the population has followed the trend set at the height of slavery. The white population which reached its peak of 3,881 in 1734 declined continuously from that time onwards, being indicative of the declining significance of white small-scale landowners

and the development of a larger plantation system.

Table 2.7
Leeward Islands Population Composition

<u>Year</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Slaves</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Coloured</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>
1672		352				
1707	1,416	2,861				
1720	2,740	7,321				
1729	3,677	14,663				
1734	3,881	17,335				
1756	2,713	21,891				
1774	1,900	23,462				
1787	1,912	20,435				
1807		26,000				
1834	1,612		19,780			
1871						28,169
1881	2,199		21,701	5,237		29,137
1891	2,343		23,637	4,896		30,876
1901						29,782
1911*	1,348		20,250	4,685		26,783
1921	1,035		17,708	3,672		22,415
1946	773		25,614	3,280	150	29,717
1960	478		34,027	3,244	79	37,828

*2,008 males emigrated to the U.S.A., Panama & Costa Rica between 1901-11
(Sources: 1672-1834:Deerr, 1934;Augier et al, 1967
1881-1891:Leeward Census of 1891
1911-1921:Leeward Census of 1921
1946: Merrill, 1958. 1960: Leeward Census)

By 1960 there were only 478 resident white people (excluding temporary residents such as those with the Peace Corps., V.S.O., C.U.S.O. etc) and people in the "coloured" category (i.e. descendants of white men and black women slaves) are gradually declining in number (from 5,237 in 1881 to 3,244 in 1960), while the black population increased steadily throughout this period.

CHAPTER THREE
THE EVOLUTION OF THE PLANTATION SYSTEM
IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES

This chapter will describe briefly the evolution of the plantation system in the British West Indies, from its inception to the end of the 19th Century, with particular emphasis on the Leeward Islands and St.Kitts.

A. Introduction

The St. Kitts sugar plantation system developed as part of the emerging capitalist society of the New World and as part of the colonial economic system it played a key role in the accumulation of capital for British merchant-capitalists (see Section B). Its initial development as a "field and factory combine" relied upon slave labour and the protection of the British market. With the advance of industrialization in Britain, both these factors came increasingly to contradict the historic process of capital accumulation, due to its narrow and restrictive nature, and the political resolution of this conflict led to the passage of the Emancipation Act in 1834 (see Section C). Through the Sugar Duties Act of 1846 and the Free Trade Act of 1876, the freedom of trade and labour necessary for capital accumulation was established, and the St. Kitts slave plantation system was transformed into what is here described as the old plantation system. Basically this system relied upon the intense use of labour which was still "unfree" due to the mechanism of binding labour to the estates through a tenant-employee relationship. This dependence upon labour was more important to the old plantation system than were either technology or modern management practices (see Section D). The old plantation system was still fundamentally dependent upon British merchant capitalists through the colonial economic structures. This ensured that St. Kitts continued to produce the low-cost, low-

quality muscovado sugar (increasing output through applying selective technology) which was needed by British sugar refineries. The increasing world production of both cane and beet sugar, together with falling costs of production, resulted in a progressive lowering of sugar prices, and this eventually brought a severe economic crisis to the muscovado producing Leeward Islands during the last quarter of the 19th Century (see Section E).

B. The capitalist basis of the plantation system

The origins of the capitalist plantation system were conditioned by the "discovery" of the New World and the decline of a feudal world order. In this perspective it was a fore-runner of European expansion in building a capitalist world order.

Several historical factors combined to make the development of plantations possible at the time it occurred: the discovery and conquest of the New World had coincided with other great journeys and explorations. It also coincided with the thresholds of industrialization and of European economic systems that hungered for market expansion and gold....It was in the context of a world perspective that the exploitation of the New World by Europeans took place, and it is hence in the context of world events that the plantation system developed. (Padilla, 1958:54).

The New World plantation system was therefore a specific adaptation to the environment of the New World, based upon a new capitalist order. For this reason, it did not entail an expansion of the old world feudal-manorial land tenure system, nor did it involve a relationship between land and man of the family farm type. Rather, from the beginning it was what Julian Steward called a "field and factory combine" (1965).

The plantation system was from its very inception a combination of capitalist means of production with a highly coerced and "unfree" labour force. For this reason, the entire organization of the production

and the social relationships associated with it were based upon a hierarchy of class, race and capital - black labour and white capital. The capitalists were able to realize a surplus through the fruits of slaves' labour, and later of "unfree" workers' labours. In this respect the plantation system was not only a motive power which transformed the New World itself, but it was also a catalyst in the disruption of an old order in Europe and the stimulation of growth into a new world order.

C. Slave plantations in the British West Indies

The slave-based system in the British West Indies emerged during the period Elena Padilla (1958) describes as the third stage of the "colonization and the development of plantations", roughly between 1600 and 1700. This was a period when the European powers were locked in a struggle to consolidate the colonies as a part of world empire-building, when the slave plantations were providing great wealth which was beginning to disrupt the old order in Europe.

In 1641 the first British West Indies sugar cane was cultivated in Barbados, and by 1643 it began to revolutionize not only the economy of Barbados but also of Britain. The cane had to be processed before shipment for sale in Britain, both because of its bulk and the small capacity of ships, and because the sugar was anyway a more acceptable commodity on the market. From its beginning, the sugar industry therefore required a large labour force for its complex division of labour, which was provided by the slave trade. (Initially the Europeans tried to recruit whites from their mother country. Through forced immigration many indentured and "criminal" whites were brought over. However, most of the whites came hoping to own land when their "unfree" labour period expired. On the one hand, the land was increasingly monopolized by the plantations, and on the other its price skyrocketed. Under these condi-

tions white immigration declined rapidly, and land-hungry whites already in the West Indies began to migrate to larger islands and the American mainland where land was available). Slave-operated plantations spread rapidly to other British West Indian islands, and by about 1650 they existed in the Leeward Islands of Antigua, St. Kitts, Nevis and Montserrat (Goveia, 1969:51).

St. Kitts itself was first colonized in 1623 after an unsuccessful attempt by Thomas Warner and his group to colonize Guiana for purposes of tobacco cultivation (Hall, 1971:3). In 1625 a French privateering ship (led by Pierre D'Esnambue) arrived for repairs, and the two parties agreed upon a joint occupation. The French settled at both ends of the island, and the British in the middle section. Using St. Kitts as a base, the British colonized Nevis in 1628, and Antigua and Montserrat in 1632, while the French colonized Martinique, Guadeloupe and Dominica (ibid.). St. Kitts became an exclusively British colony as the result of the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht, and this made it possible to organize production without serious war interruptions. Initially the Leeward Islands all planted tobacco and cotton, but both crops yielded to American competition. Sugar cane cultivation was introduced around 1650 by Barbadian planters who had learned of it through the Portuguese expelled by the Dutch from the Pernambuco areas of Brazil between 1627 and 1654. By early 18th Century it had replaced cotton and provided the basis for the slave-based plantation system.

The development of this system had far-reaching consequences throughout the West Indies in the second half of the 17th Century. In terms of the organization of production, the cultivation and manufacture of sugar required large quantities of land, capital and labour. This

led to the disappearance of small household-based cultivation, and the emergence of relatively few large units of production which were dependent upon capital raised by British merchant capitalists. It was therefore capital rather than marketing arrangements that tied the plantation system to British commercial houses. As will be seen later, this need for capital was the basis upon which the British exploited all other factors such as marketing, technology, colonial ties and slavery, and it underlies the evolution of St. Kitts and other West Indian plantation systems up to the present time.

The change from small-scale tobacco cultivation to sugar production dictated the change in labour supply. The cheapest sources at that time were Negroes and the small white farmers displaced by the change. In Barbados there were 11,200 small white farmers and 5,680 Negro slaves in 1645, but by 1667 there were only 745 large plantation owners and 82,023 slaves (Williams, 1966:54). In Nevis the white population decreased by more than three-fifths, while the black population more than doubled between 1672 and 1708. In Montserrat in the same period, the white population declined by more than two-thirds while the black population increased by more than eleven times (ibid:65). In St. Kitts there were 1,747 whites and 2,861 slaves in 1727, but within five years a total of 6,600 slaves had been imported and by the end of the 18th Century there was a total population of 4,000 whites and 26,000 slaves (Merrill, 1958:72-73). The slave trade was started by the Portuguese and English and lasted from 1651 to its abolition in 1808. It was estimated that 1,900,000 slaves were brought to the British West Indies, mainly for the prospering sugar plantation system (Augier et al, 1967:67. For recent figures see Curtin, 1969).

The rapid decline in the numbers of small white farmers and the arrival of a large black slave labour force meant a radical change in the social structure, based upon a clear-cut class and race hierarchy, with the white planters as an elite and the black slaves at the bottom, and in between a small but expanding number of free coloured people (born of unions between white men and enslaved black women) who had no real place in the plantation society, being barred from inheritance, the management of estates, and public office. The only avenues open to this class were to become pedlars or small merchants, until the second half of the 19th Century when some of them could become leading planters, managers, lawyers and merchants, as a result of the growing phenomenon of landlord absenteeism. By creating the "free coloured" class and allowing its rise, the white planters laid the foundations for undermining the whole slave system, for people in this class were not productive and their desires to become leading elites was to become a decisive force in future social and political developments.

In political terms, the growing sugar profits led the British merchant capitalists to increase their monopolization of the colonies through the use of the Crown Colony system, even though military power was needed to overcome planters' resistance. The Colonies could elect their own Assemblies, but a Governor would be appointed to each by the Crown, and council nominations were in his hands. Furthermore, as the colonies were their main source of wealth, the European nations vied with each other to obtain exclusive trade with them. The British Navigation Acts of 1651 and 1660 were an example, and the sugar-producing Leeward Islands were denied the preferable trade with the Dutch, eventually causing a crisis in the West Indies. The main reasons for this crisis

were the following: exclusive trade relationships brought the British West Indies into exclusive dependence upon the unprofitable British market; lumber, animals and foodstuffs were provided to the plantations by the American colonies, but after Independence in 1766 this trade became subject to the Navigation Acts. As a result, the West Indies faced increasing costs of production at the same time as sugar prices were falling rapidly because of increased production in other islands such as Haiti, Dominica and Cuba. Under these political and trade conditions, colonial planters agreed to pay 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ % tax on all exports, and in return the Crown assumed the responsibility for the future welfare and defence of the islands (Hall, 1971:5-6).

Table 3.1

Prices for Essential Estate Supplies before and after
the American Revolution

<u>Commodity</u>	<u>Pre-war</u> <u>£. s. d.</u>	<u>Post-war</u> <u>£. s. d.</u>
<u>Barbados</u>		
Lumber, per 1,000 ft.	4 0 0	8 0 0
Horses, each	20 0 0	30 0 0
Horned cattle, each	to 5 0 0) 7 10 0	10 0 0
Rice, per cwt.	12 6	1 10 0
Indian Corn, per bushel	2 6	3 9
Beef, per barrel	2 10 0	3 0 0
<u>Leeward Islands</u>		
Oak Staves, per thousand	to 5 0 0) 10 0 0	to 12 0 0) 15 0 0
Horses, each	to 16 10 0) 35 0 0	to 30 0 0) 70 0 0
Cattle, each	to 16 10 0) 19 16 0	to 20 0 0) 40 0 0
Rice, per cwt.	to 18 0) 1 4 0	to 1 18 0) 2 1 3
Indian Corn, per bushel	to 4 0) 8 0	to 8 3) 10 0
Beef, per barrel	to 2 10 0) 4 0 0	to 4 0 0) 6 12 0
<u>Jamaica</u>		
Oak Staves, per thousand	to 6 0 0) 18 0 0	to 10 0 0) 20 0 0
Indian Corn, per bushel	4 4	7 6
Common Flour, per cwt.	to 15 0) 1 0 0	to 1 0 0) 2 10 0

(Source: Augier et al, 1967:125)

In short, the development of the slave-based plantation system led to the economic, political and military dependence by the Colonies upon the British. The exploitation by the metropolis and their merchant capitalists caused abject poverty in the West Indies and what Andre Gunder Frank (1969) called the basis of "development of underdevelopment" in the Colonies.

By the 18th Century, the British West Indies had come to be called "the jewel in England's crown". Sugar was established as "king" and sugar plantation profits were greater than those of any other cultivation in Europe or America. For this reason, European nations went to war to deny each other access to sugar, or to protect their sugar producing colonies (Augier et al, 1967:79). The scale of economic benefit brought by the West Indies to Britain can be seen by the following:

In the scale of the colonial values, it should be noted that contemporary opinion ascribed the place of first importance to the possession of the slave and sugar islands of the West Indies - and not without good reason, as the value of Britain's trade with her Caribbean possession in 1783 amounted to no less than £4,250,000 (over half of this with Jamaica alone) compared with a little over £ 2million with India and £ 882,000 with Canada and Newfoundland. (Rudé, 1967:54).

Between Barbados and the Leeward Islands sugar exported to Britain rose steadily. In 1699 these islands shipped 21,300 tons of sugar, and by 1720 this figure had increased to more than 49,740 tons. Within twenty years sugar exports had more than doubled (Augier et al, 1967:91).

D. Economic and political background of the transition from slavery to wage labour.

It has been seen how the whole slavery system developed in response to British interests, but by the latter part of the 18th Century the very success of British commercial and industrial expansion policy produced

increasing conflicts within the Leeward Islands' sugar industry.

These policies brought severe economic problems to the West Indies. In the first place, the Navigation Acts resulted in competitive sugar production being established in other countries - especially in the Spanish and French possessions of Santo Domingue, Martinique and Guadeloupe - and this in turn resulted in falling sugar prices (see Tables 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4), and in increased competition among the Europeans for control over sugar supplies, culminating in the Seven Years' War (1756 - 1763).

The War itself had many detrimental effects upon the West Indies. Apart from disruptions to trading, sugar production itself was interrupted, and the population suffered many hardships. Moreover, some islands changed hands, and these difficulties led many planters to leave the islands altogether, for the War had shown them to be mere pawns in the British merchant capitalists' game. But they had long been subject to British exploitation, as is apparent from the following:

1. Tax levies on the sugar producing colonies were continually increased. For example, they had been raised over 300% at the turn of the 19th Century. In 1831, while the West Indian planter received 14s. 6d. per cwt. of sugar, British duty actually exceeded this figure, being 24s. 0d. per cwt. The exploitation was even recognized by the British Government hearing of the 1832 West India Committee:

...I consider that there is no article in commerce, the produce of the English colony, that shows so large a sum given to the revenue of the country and so small net proceeds to the proprietors as sugar; £4,700,000 on the one hand and only £2,700,000 to the proprietors on the other; out of the £2,700,000 the planters have to pay the cost of producing the sugar. (1832:161).

2. There were exorbitant interest charges placed upon capital used by planters. For example, the interest charge on working capital

Table 3.2

Prices of Raw Sugar at Nantes

1739 to 1789
(in shillings per cwt.)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Price</u>
1739	16	1772	24
1740	16	1773	24
1741	18	1774	25
1744	16	1775	27
1745	8	1776	29
1747	12	1777	29
1750	18	1781	29
1752	18	1782	29
1753	20	1783	29
1765	31	1784	24
1767	29	1786	26
1768	28	1787	28
1769	27	1788	28
1770	28	1789	28
1771	24		

(Source: Deerr, 1949:530)

Table 3.3

Prices of Raw Sugar in Amsterdam 1623-1806

(in shillings per cwt.)

Year	Price	Year	Price	Year	Price
1623	56	1704	45	1744	29
1633	45	1707	37	1745	38
1640	65	1709	35	1746	29
1641	56	1710	31	1747	27
1642	56	1712	40	1749	25
1643	56	1715	30	1750	14
1644	56	1716	26	1751	18
1677	27	1717	25	1752	19
1678	26	1718	26	1753	17
1679	26	1719	26-38	1754	23
1680	26	1720	24	1755	33
1681	20	1721	21	1756	28
1682	19	1722	26	1757	27
1683	19	1723	24	1758	35
1684	25	1725	26	1759	38
1685	20	1726	25	1760	30
1686	18	1727	22	1761	34
1687	17	1728	27	1763	26
1688	19	1729	23	1764	22
1689	27	1730	19	1765	27
1691	33	1731	18	1766	19
1692	32	1732	16	1767	27
1693	32	1733	19	1768	26
1694	40	1734	17	1769	25
1695	36	1735	15	1770	33
1697	28	1736	14	1776	14-19
1698	33	1737	15	1788	19-25
1699	36	1738	16	1795	35-49
1700	38	1739	21	1797	93
1701	50	1740	26	1800	74
1702	38	1741	21	1801	50
1703	41	1742	23	1804	89
		1743	26	1806	60

(Source: Deerr, 1949:530)

Table 3.4

Prices and Average Price of Raw Sugar (Cost, Insurance, Freight) in London
1728 to 1939 (in shillings per cwt)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Price</u>
1728	24	1781	55-72	1832	23-30	1888	13/0
1730	22	1782	26-63	1833	26-31	1889	16/0
1731	20	1783	22-48	1834	31-33	1890	13/0
1732	18	1784	18-46	1835	30-38	1891	13/6
1733	17	1785	26-42	1836	38-45	1893	14/3
1734	26	1786	29-48	1837	33-37	1894	11/3
1735	19	1787	24-47	1838	33-42	1895	10/0
1736	19	1788	34-46	1839	39	1896	10/9
1737	25	1789	31-47	1840	49	1897	9/3
1738	22	1790	38-46	1841	40	1898	9/6
1739	26	1791	47-65	1842	37	1899	10/6
1740	32	1792	48-76	1844	33	1900	11/3
1741	30	1793	41-73	1847	27	1901	9/3
1742	21	1794	32-67	1848	26	1902	7/3
1743	27	1795	42-75	1849	22	1903	8/6
1744	32	1796	61-78	1850	23	1904	10/3
1745	30	1797	52-75	1852	20	1905	11/0
1746	39	1798	59-83	1853	22	1906	8/6
1747	43	1799	26-87	1854	20	1907	9/3
1748	32	1800	32-70	1855	24	1908	9/9
1749	29	1801	32-75	1856	28	1909	10/3
1750	28	1802	62-55	1857	34	1910	11/0
1751	30	1803	30-58	1858	24	1911	11/6
1752	39	1804	46-66	1859	23	1912	11/0
1753	33	1805	48-59	1860	24	1913	9/6
1754	36	1806	39-49	1861	22	1914	11/7
1756	35	1807	32-38	1862	20	1915	14/4
1757	37	1808	32-50	1863	21	1916	24/3
1758	42	1809	36-51	1862	20	1917	31/6
1759	31-47	1810	43-54	1863	21	1918	33/0
1760	32-48	1811	35-45	1864	26	1919	38/5
1761	32-50	1812	42-49	1865	22	1920	58/0
1762	27-47	1813	51-75	1866	21	1921	18/3
1763	26-38	1814	54-97	1867	22	1922	15/3
1764	28-40	1815	57-75	1868	22	1923	25/9
1765	32-43	1816	49-60	1869	24	1924	21/9
1766	29-42	1817	44-54	1870	23	1925	12/9
1767	33-42	1818	47-55	1871	25/6	1926	12/3
1768	32-41	1819	36-51	1873	22/6	1927	13/9
1769	33-42	1820	34-37	1874	21/6	1928	11/7
1770	31-43	1821	29-35	1875	20/0	1929	9/0
1771	32-44	1822	28-34	1876	21/6	1930	6/7
1772	29-43	1823	27-37	1877	24/6	1931	6/4
1773	28-44	1824	30-34	1878	20/0	1932	5/9
1774	27-43	1825	32-41	1879	19/0	1933	5/3
1775	26-39	1826	30-39	1880	20/6	1934	4/9
1776	30-50	1827	32-36	1881	21/3	1935	4/8
1777	35-60	1828	32-38	1882	20/0	1936	4/9
1778	40-64	1829	26-30	1883	19/0	1937	6/4
1779	50-59	1830	23-25	1884	13/3	1938	5/5
1780	45-59	1831	23-25	1886	11/9	1939	7/4

(Source: Deerr, 1949:531)

was running at between 15% and 20% by 1832, while interest charges on loans against landed security was 4%. Most planters' land was already held in security, and they had to borrow at the higher rate; property values had fallen by two-thirds over the previous ten years as a result of these charges. (Colquhoun, Colonial Agent for St. Vincent, Dominica, St.Kitts-Nevis and the Virgin Islands: Great Britain, 1832:14).

3. In addition, the British capitalists restricted mortgage lending, and stipulated that planters had to consign their produce to designated ships. The Navigation Acts also forced shipments to be made on British-owned ships with their excessive freight rates.

As well as all these problems caused by external factors, the planters were already experiencing internal problems. The falling sugar prices coincided with increased costs of production. One example quoted at the 1832 West India Committee was:

Table 3.5

Sugar costs and price 1831

	s.	d.
Average cost per cwt. sugar (not including charges for interest on capital and depreciation)	15	8
Average total shipping expenses to G.B.	8	6
	24	2
Average price in 1831	23	8
NET LOSS		6

(Source: Great Britain, 1832)

One writer claimed that the planters' net income per hogshead of sugar sold in Britain fell by half in the space of one decade (Goveia, 1965:13).

Due to a growing demand for slave field labour in the Southern United States, the purchase price per slave rose from £35 to £50 in 1793 alone (Augier et al, 1967:124). One Antiguan planter spent a total of

£1,574 in 1832 to keep 380 slaves (Hall, 1971:38-9),

Table 3.6
Accounts of Nichola Town Estates, St.Kitts
(in £ sterling)

	1830	1831	1832	1833
<u>Expenses</u>				
Salaries	540	473	462	469
Wages (slave maintenance)	1,320	1,320	1,320	1,320
Supplies (lumber etc.)	228	257	261	300
Working animals	-	132	68	35
Taxes	128	56	96	58
Miscellaneous	140	86	94	153
Total island expenses	2,356	2,324	2,301	2,435
Supply from Great Britain	400	400	400	500
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,756	2,724	2,701	2,935
<u>Income</u>				
Sale of cattle etc.	75	50	43	13
Proceeds of rum & molasses	783	680	855	1,136
Total island receipts	858	730	898	1,149
Net outstanding	1,898	1,994	1,803	1,786
Total tons sugar produced	198	145	185	197
Average cost per ton of sugar	11.9	14.6	12.4	12.3
Average hourly cost of labour	6.7	9.1	7.0	6.7

(Adapted from Hall, 1971:37, Table 3)

These figures clearly demonstrate that not only the initial cost of purchasing slaves, but also the maintenance costs they involved, amounted to more than 50% to 60% of the cost of sugar production.

In addition there was a growing population of "free coloured" people, as Table 3.7 (see below) shows. The falling proportion of white planters in the population reduced their control over slaves and free coloured people, and their position became precarious.

One result of the accumulation of all these difficulties was the increasing tendency for planters to leave the operation of their estates to resident attorneys or managers, and to live away from the islands themselves. Their far-reaching subjection to the edicts of the British gave

them little incentive to settle permanently in the Colonies, and the tendency developed for them to exploit local land and labour on a short, intensive basis and then to leave. As early as 1744 the St. Kitts Legislature was concerned about the effect that absentee land-ownership was having upon the problems of slave control (Merrill, 1958:79).

Table 3.7
Leeward Islands Population Composition
(rough estimates in 000's)

		<u>1812</u>	<u>1818</u>	<u>1834</u>
<u>Antigua</u>	White		2.1	2.0
	Free Coloured		2.2	4.0
	Slaves		31.5	29.1
<u>Barbados</u>	White			
	Free Coloured			
	Slaves	0.6		0.5
<u>Montserrat</u>	White	0.4		0.3
	Free Coloured	0.4		0.8
	Slaves	6.5		5.0
<u>Nevis</u>	White	0.5		0.4
	Free Coloured	0.6		1.7
	Slaves	9.2		8.8
<u>St. Kitts</u>	White	1.6		2.0
	Free Coloured	1.9		
	Slaves	19.8		19.7

(Source: Hall, 1971:8)

At the time of American Independence there was a desire among many planters to align themselves with America, but the very control which they wished to escape prevented this. Not only did the West Indies monocrop economy depend entirely upon the British market, but the British military presence in the Caribbean made rebellion unfeasible, especially in view of the high rate of absenteeism and the precarious position of the planters in relation to the more numerous coloured population. It was clearly in the interests of the colonial planters to approach their problems through

the institution of higher sugar prices, lower costs and increased control over the slave population. However, the interests of the more powerful British lay in another direction.

At the end of the Seven Years War, the British changed their tactics of control over the sugar empire. There had been increasing recognition by the British of their need for a wide market in which to sell their growing amount of manufactured goods (Goveia, 1965:13) which expressed itself in the Free Port Act of 1763. Both major effects of this free trade policy brought increased difficulties to the planters. In the first place, the War of Independence in 1776 (to which outrage against the free trade policy contributed) completely disrupted the system of sugar exports, in which America had a re-export role and provided cheap food and other vital supplies to the West Indies. As already mentioned, the free trade policy led to great increases in the costs of sugar production. Secondly, free trade immediately increased the competition from other sugar suppliers. This resulted in even lower sugar prices, and led in turn to an increased demand for sugar. By 1820 the free trade policy had resulted in a rapid increase in sugar production, beyond the expanding consumption needs of Britain. Figures given to the 1832 West India Committee reveal this growth.

Table 3.8

West Indies Sugar Supplies to Europe 1826-31

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tons</u>
1826	71,800
1827	75,600
1828	92,600
1829	100,700
1830	108,000
1831	108,800

(Source: Great Britain, 1832: 161)

But demand did not keep up with supply, and in 1832 the British were concerned with the annual surplus of about 50,000 hogshead of sugar which they

desired to re-export, which would be impossible without further price falls.

It therefore became increasingly clear that monopoly, restricted trade, and high sugar prices brought a rapid increase in sugar production and in competition, which in turn brought sugar prices down drastically. At the same time, the rising cost of sugar production, mainly due to the cost of slaves and their maintenance, brought a crisis in the monopoly doctrine of mercantile trade. Increasingly the free trade doctrine was supported by leading industrial capitalists who attacked slavery as the cause of the difficulty. They saw that their accumulation of surplus had to come from a form of labour other than costly slavery, and from a further expansion in production. In this sense, the slavery system of production had simply passed the optimal point of its growth, and was now in conflict with the process of surplus accumulation. A new form of labour and a new means of production had to be found in order to let surplus accumulation proceed. However, free trade did not mean free trade for all, not even for the colonists and their sugar. Free trade itself was based upon the same dependence of colonies upon a minority class of property owners in the British market, and it benefited only them.

The Emancipation of slaves became official in 1834. It is ironic that the wealth of many anti-slavery movement leaders was built up through the slave trade itself (Williams, 1966) but this does reflect the fact that the establishment of a colonial production system based upon wage labour was seen as beneficial (cheaper) to the British merchant capitalists.

E. Free labour and the development of the old plantation system

As a result of the 1834 Emancipation, the British West Indies sugar plantation system was transformed from its slave-based nature to the "free labour" old plantation system, and two fundamental changes took place. On

the one hand the British West Indian sugar plantation was brought increasingly into open competition on an ever larger scale with foreign produced sugar, and on the other hand this meant that increasing attention had to be given to the productivity of labour (including technology, management, and the scale of production).

On the whole these two fundamental issues were solved in different ways, depending on the size of the producing areas. In the larger ones, such as Trinidad, Jamaica and British Guiana, the shortage of labour hastened technological adaptation, while in the small islands such as St. Kitts, Antigua and Barbados there was a plentiful labour supply, and so technological adaptation was more selective, and limited to the extent that the emphasis was placed on increasing the amount of production rather than on improving sugar quality. The plantation system in St. Kitts therefore continued to be labour intensive, but under the new free labour system the binding mechanism was through the oppressive tenant-landlord and employer-employee relationships.

The 1834 Emancipation Act provided for a six year period of apprenticeship for the transition of former slaves, and only slaves under the age of six years were completely free. This limitation in slaves' freedom brought riots in St. Kitts to which the British responded with the landing of troops from Antigua (Hall, 1971:24). (In Antigua, the planters dominated the Legislature and voted against the apprenticeship scheme, for this island had inherited a most abundant labour force from slavery). The apprenticeship scheme was satisfactory to neither planters nor labourers; the latter were only to be paid for work which exceeded the obligatory minimum of 40½ hours a week, and they were therefore barely free from their former masters. This obligatory minimum restricted planters

too, for they were not completely free to hire wage labourers according to their needs, and were unable to operate their estates efficiently in the face of a refusal to work by many former slaves. This seems to be the main reason why the apprenticeship was abolished so soon (1837 in Montserrat, March 1838 in Nevis, May 1838 in St. Kitts) and by August 1838 the whole British Caribbean area had adopted a completely "free" labour system.

The abolition of the scheme made it possible for the Leeward Island plantation system to reorganize. This depended upon two factors; either increasing the price of sugar through world market supply and demand, or reducing the cost of producing sugar through changing the organization of production. The planters had faced the choice between raising sugar prices or reducing production costs throughout the 19th Century, with little success. Their islands were small and the soil had been continuously worked for sugar alone since mid-18th Century. Thus they were in a disadvantageous position compared to Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guyana, Cuba and later East India, where the units of production were large, and good soil was relatively abundant, making cheaper production possible. On the other hand, the increasing number of larger sugar producing areas meant a continual lowering of sugar prices. The only way to protect the Leeward Islands against these falling prices would have been to reinstate the preferential duty system that existed during slavery. But Emancipation had brought the end of that era and a new emphasis upon capital with its tendency to increase productivity, cut costs and aid the accumulation of profits through increased competitiveness of prices. The old method of trying to control the market was therefore not feasible, and so attention turned to increasing efficiency, especially through the application of technology to cane cultivation.

In this struggle, the estates of St. Kitts, Antigua and Barbados had a most important advantage over those of the larger sugar producing areas, namely their abundant supply of labour. This meant that they did not have to follow Jamaica, Trinidad and British Guyana in importing labour by indenture from East India, China and Mauritius. Immediately after the abolition of apprenticeships the most pressing problem the Leeward Island planters faced was how to make former field slaves continue to work for lower returns than before. In fact, workers were leaving the countryside in great numbers, being unwilling to work under their old slave masters. There was a drift into the towns; for example, by 1845 the town of Basseterre had more than half the St. Kitts' population. In addition planters tried to control the emigration of workers to Trinidad, Jamaica and British Guyana. In the words of G. Estridge, owner of the Estridge Estate in St. Kitts:

"Yes, there were labourers, but there is not labour enough.....We feel the falling off of work in a good season, but not in a bad season. Emigration is our greatest evil." (Great Britain, 1942:3231).

Their worst fears did not materialize as St. Kitts lost only about 500 workers through emigration to Trinidad and British Guyana, while she received about 200 people from Nevis, Anguilla and St. Martin (a Dutch island where slavery was in force) between 1834 and 1842. During this time, English and Irish workers were being encouraged to emigrate to St. Kitts in order to provide "moral leadership" to black workers; some Lebanese and Syrians arrived and became merchants and planters themselves in a later period.

Antigua planters also rapidly reduced the meager amount of food that was produced locally during the slavery period. This reduced their expenses and created absolute dependence by the workers upon wage labour.

Thus, a cheap and abundant labour supply was ensured. In St. Kitts a

Table 3.9

Acreage for Provisions on Fifty Antigua Estates

<u>Year</u>	<u>Acres</u>
1828	1,801
1829	1,830
1830	2,336
1831	2,289
1832	2,506
1833	2,609
1834	1,700
1835	619

(Source: Hall, 1971:38)

different method was used. Workers were allowed to continue occupying estate houses and grow provisions on the estate land as they had during slavery, but were evicted if they did not supply the labour demanded by the estates.

The different methods used by Antigua and St. Kitts for controlling labour had implications for the type of villages which developed. In Antigua the "independent village system" was widespread, whereas there was only one independent village in St. Kitts - and this was created by the sale of unproductive cane land by the Sadler Estate. Such villages, of which there were many elsewhere, offered more freedom to former slaves, for they owned their own homes and could chose their employers and their line of work. They made "job labour" possible (i.e. when a price was agreed in advance and a particular job contracted) and bargaining power increased workers' earnings. In St. Kitts the workers had a daily wage, working from sunrise to sunset for a mere 6d. a day.

The St. Kitts workers had no choice but to work for their land-lords at whatever wage rates they were offered. This oppressive condition was subsequently to aid the development of one of the most militant labour movements in the West Indies. Even then, and in spite of various measures

to control estate workers in St. Kitts, the latter resented the oppression enough often to withhold their services from the estates, for instance, by reporting sick. One result of this was to stimulate the selective introduction of labour saving machinery. Planters imported ploughs, harrows, wheel-barrows, weeding machines and other agricultural equipment, and began to discover the important principle of reducing production costs through machinery while avoiding the need to attract labour by increasing wages. For example,

A man and a boy, with a plough and three horses, could prepare an acre for planting as quickly as eight field labourers using hoes. A man, a boy, a weeding machine and a horse were equal to sixteen labourers in a weeding gang. (Hall, 1971:53).

The maintenance of lower wages throughout the 1830's to the 1850's can be seen from the following:

Table 3.10
Daily Rates of Money Wages to First-Class
Field Workers.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Antigua</u>	<u>Montserrat</u>	<u>Nevis</u>	<u>St. Kitts</u>
1839	6d.	5d.	6d.	6d.
1842	9d.	5½d.	6d.	9d.
1845	1s.	5½d.	10d.	1s.
1848	6d.	4d.	5d.	6d.
1850 to 1870	Little change anywhere and certainly no sustained increases			

(Source: Great Britain, 1842 & 1848, from various minutes of Evidence.)

The daily wage rate of 6d. for field estate workers was not in fact any higher than the earlier figure for maintaining daily subsistence costs of slaves. Eight years after Emancipation it was confirmed that

...when the daily wage was 6d. sterling a day, wage-labour was cheaper than slave-labour had been....
(when) the daily wage had been increased to 9d. sterling....this put the cost of wage-labour just higher than the cost of slave-labour. (Hall, 1971:39)

It is clear that these calculations included only the cost of maintaining

slave labour and excludes the necessary maintenance of slave children, non-field slaves, and the old and infirm slaves. Thus it seems that the 6d. per day wage for labour was indeed very cheap, if not just beyond the starvation level that plantations maintained before.

In conclusion, under the conditions of free labour, St. Kitts planters utilized various schemes such as the control of emigration, the power of eviction, and the selective introduction of machinery to ensure an abundant supply of labour in spite of growing absenteeism by the workers, at the lowest possible wage. This lowered production costs and provided the basis for a recovery (albeit short-lived) of the sugar industry to pre-Emancipation level by 1860, not only permitting competition with other sugar producing areas in the British West Indies, but also making sugar production a very profitable enterprise once again.

F. Capitalist and colonial nature of the old plantation system

World sugar production increased rapidly throughout the 19th Century. The production of beet sugar in Continental Europe had been encouraged during the Napoleonic Wars in order to avoid dependence upon sugar supplied by the colonies of their enemy (namely, Britain). Production expanded rapidly with the help of subsidy and a modern manufacturing process. As a result, beet sugar was produced at a lower price and began to dominate the British market.

Meanwhile British manufacturers began to press for freer trade to ease the import of cheaper food supplies for its growing urban populations, and to control other resources such as raw materials in order to accelerate industrialization and empire-building. Under these pressures, the British Government abolished the graduated duty system in 1846 by passing the British Sugar Duties Act (and in 1876 adopted a general free trade policy).

This Act allowed for the gradual reduction of the existing preference given to colonial sugar until equalization was achieved in 1852. It therefore continued to give a small but decreasing protection to the colonies, but was designed mainly to continue protection for the British refining industry (which required cheap muscovado sugar) rather than being intended to achieve complete free trade for all grades of sugar.

The initial reaction of the Leeward Islands planters to the Act was one of great disappointment, for they had hoped to be guaranteed a continuation of their protected place in the British market. To many planters who had become indebted to British merchant capitalists during the latter part of slavery the Act was fatal. The colonial and capitalist dependency relationship between themselves and the British had merely been redefined. They mobilized a protest which led to the establishment of the Select Committee of Enquiry in 1848 with the result that the planters were granted a two-year extension of their protection, but any hope of continued protection was out of the question. Thus they had until 1854 to reorganize their sugar production under free labour and to prepare themselves to compete with sugar from the East Indies and Cuba, and from Mauritius (which together with India was another British colony with the same advantages as the British West Indies between 1825 and 1836 - Augier et al, 1960:193). This meant that many planters who were already indebted to Britain had to find more credit. An example of their predicament can be found in Aston Davoren (a leading member of the Assembly and an important proprietor) who in 1845 owned Stonecastle Estate in St. Kitts, with 238 acres of cane land and 111 acres of uncultivated pasture land. He owed Thompson Hankey & Co. of London £1,066 16s. Od. at January 1848, and being unable to meet the reduction of debt to £300 by the end of April, in desperation proposed to

sell his animal stock (which was essential for sugar cultivation) in order to liquidate £700 of his debt. He was eventually spared from this, but at the end of November 1851 he still owed £748 2s. 6d. plus interest, and when he died in 1857 he still owed over £296 and the estate was sold to pay off the debt (Hall, 1971:97-103). In other words, planters in St. Kitts and other Leeward Islands were still heavily indebted to London merchant capitalists, and continued to be tied just as closely to them as they had been during the slavery period. Emancipation and the Sugar Duties Act merely complicated the issue.

Britain was suffering a commercial crisis during the 1840's as the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. This background complicated the West Indian planters' ability to secure credit from the British even further, and eventually many were forced to sell out. Others sought the credit from local merchants, and the West Indian Encumbered Estates Act of 1860 resulted in rapid changes in the pattern of estate ownership (compare Table 3.11 and Table 3.12 for details of ownership in 1828 and 1898 respectively). Many local merchants or lawyers representing absentee landlords became planters themselves; for example, Farrara from Portugal, Losada who was Lebanese, Benjamin Greene, the Thurstons, the Marshalls, the Wigleys and Burts. Changes in ownership made possible the elimination of many small-sized plantations without credit backing (or the heavily indebted ones) thus stimulating the process of amalgamation and the development of larger units of production. Nevertheless, the capital dependency was not altered between West Indian planters and the London merchant capitalists. Although the Sugar Duties Act did lead to the rapid decline of small and marginal producers as intended, it stimulated the development of the West Indian plantation system along new lines. The process of

Table 3.11

St. Kitts Estate Ownership in 1828

<u>Proprietor</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>Acres of cane land</u>
<u>St. George, Basseterre</u>		
Sir Wastel Briscoe	Priddie's	154
Sir Wastel Briscoe	Flemings'	142
Sir Wastel Briscoe	Shadwell	121
Sir James Blake	Diamond	125
David Dewar		198
J.St.Leger Douglass	College	197
The Hon.Isaac Dupuy	Frigate Bay	166
Timothy Earle	La Guaritte	111
Timothy Earle	Mornes	64
Sir Wm. Payne Gallwey	Pond	171
Jn. Geo. Goldtrap	Camp	23
Admiral Losack		77
Thomas Lucass		146
A. Mathew		183
The Hon. Stedman Rawlins	Mornes	135
Earl Romney	Mornes	110
John Taylor		181
John Tyson (dec'd)	Limekiln	68
Wm. Woodley (dec'd)	Greenland	153
<u>St. Peter, Basseterre</u>		
John Amery	Clay Hill	104
Mrs. Margaret Bayford (dec'd)		79
Sir John Boyd	Fountain	148
Sir Wastel Briscoe	Westhope	44
Messrs. Compton & Poule	Golden Rock	155
Lord Combermere	Stapletons	203
Lord Combermere	Worthington's	46
The Hon. James Davoren	Canada	342
Jn.St.Leger Douglass	Pensez-y-bien	200
The Hon.Isaac Dupuy	Frigate Bay	36
Timothy Earle	O. G.	101
Sir Wm. Payne Gallwey	Fancy	54
Nicholas Clements Henry	Monkey Hill	53
Thomas Lucass		121
Messrs. Mannings & Anderson	Mornes	143
Messrs. Mannings & Anderson	Olivees	156
Messrs. Mannings & Anderson	Parry's	194
Go. Wright Mardenbrough		73
Daniel B. Mather	Penny Tenny	133
Sir Wm.Napier Milliken		187
The Hon.Chas.Bertie Percy		200
Messrs. Smith & Piguénit	Blois	179
Thomas Tyson	Muddy Pond	82
Thomas Tyson	Conaree	105
Wm. Woodley (dec'd)	Needsmust	186

(Table 3.11 cont)

<u>Proprietor</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>Acres of cane land</u>
<u>St. Mary, Cayon</u>		
Chas. Adamson	Spring	104
Chas. Adamson	Lodge	126
Sir Wastel Briscoe	Grange	136
General Crosbie		144
Anthony Cunyngham		259
The Hon. Isaac Dupuy		174
Timothy Earle	Watkins' Island	152
Daniel B. Mathew		162
Sir Francis Waskett Myers		102
Wm. Ottley		141
Chas. Spooner (dec'd)		158
John Swindell	Key	113
Mrs. Ann Dalzell Thomson		113
Jn. W.D. Wilson (dec'd)		263
<u>Christ Church, Nichola Town</u>		
Chas. Adamson	Lodge	48
Griffin Bascum	Bakers'	135
John Bourryau (dec'd)		130
John Bourryau (dec'd)		152
Messrs. Compton & Poole	Mills	181
Geo. & Rob. Dennistown	Rosehill	75
John Estridge (dec'd)	Hill	345
Benjamin Greene		150
Thomas C.M. Montgomerie		117
Chas. Spooner (dec'd)		140
John Swindell	Mansion	108
John Swindell	Hope	118
Wm. Woodley (dec'd)	272	
<u>St. John, Cappesterre</u>		
Jas. Thomas Caines, M.D.	Belle Vue	93
Mrs. Elizabeth S. Chitton		115
Messrs. G. & R. Dennistown & Co.	Geagans	141
Messrs. G. & R. Dennistown & Co.	Harriss's	150
John Estridge (dec'd)	Bramble	112
John Estridge (dec'd)		135
John Lynel Trench		165
Nicholas C. Henry	Houstouns	161
Lady Lavington		194
Sir Francis Waskett Myers	K. C. S.	134
Messrs. Mannings & Anderson	Profit	152
Edward Parson (dec'd)		222
John Hart Rawlins	Stonecastel	154
John Hart Rawlins	Feuilleateau's	129
Ja.E.A.Sadler, M.D.		184
Messrs. Smith & Piguenit	Gerald's	71
Messrs. Smith & Piguenit	Mereer's	uncult.
Messrs. Smith & Piguenit	Deep Bay	135
Messrs. Smith & Piguenit	Gibbons	173

(Table 3.11 cont)

<u>Proprietor</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>Acres of cane land</u>
John Swindell	Colhoun	134
John Willett Willett		74
<u>Ste. Anne, Sandy Point</u>		
Sir James Blake	Pemel	151
Sir James Blake	Farm	235
Wm. Matthew Burt (dec'd)		209
Lord Cranston		384
Richard A. Fahie	Garnier's	74
Richard A. Fahie	Belle Tete	81
Hubert Guichard (dec'd)		37
Chas. Leigh (dec'd)		115
Messrs. Mannings & Anderson	Prospect Hill	140
George G. Mills	Bottom	139
John Mercer, R.N.	Pump	117
Messrs. Mills & Swanston	Somersalls	247
Miss Orton		84
Sir Gillies Payne		206
Chas. Payne		90
<u>St. Paul, Cappesterre</u>		
Geo. Henry Burt	Brothersons	215
Wm. Crooke (dec'd)	Leighs'	97
Messrs. Ede and Bond	Johnstones'	115
Wm. Fenton (dec'd)		uncult.
Duncan Glassfierd (dec'd)	Nisbett's	95
Duncan Glassfierd (dec'd)	Tully Boddy	61
Edward Hardtman	Newtons'	116
Mrs. Martha Heldon (dec'd)		143
Geo. G. Mills	Betimont	214
Geo. G. Mills		145
Edward Osborne (dec'd)	Convent	89
Jas. Rawlins (dec'd)	Mount Pleasant	195
Jas. Rawlins (dec'd)	White Gate	127
Messrs. Smith & Pigueint	Brownes'	110
Dominick Trent (dec'd)		uncult.
Wm. Augustus Vaughan		66
Nathaniel Wells		173
John Willett Willett	Red Gate	281
<u>Trinity</u>		
John Amory	West Farm	145
Henry Boon	Theroulders'	108
Sir John Boyd		207
Jn. Geo. Goldrap	Thomas & Mahons'	144
Sir Anthony Hart	Cottage	99
Sir Anthony Hart	Retreat	57
John Hazell		74
Nicholas Clements Henry		38
Wm. Ottley		169
The Hon. Jas. Phillips		183

(Table 3.11 cont)

<u>Proprietor</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>Acres of cane land</u>
John Hart Rawlins	Johnsons	127
John Hart Rawlins	Farm	88
John Tyson (dec'd)	Mount Pleasant	117
<u>St. Thomas, Middle Island</u>		
David Dewar (dec'd)		34
Sir Jas. Douglas (dec'd)	Lambeth	200
David Evans		115
Doctor Transles		33
Benjamin Hutchinson (dec'd)		104
Benjamin Hutchinson (dec'd)	Kerie's Field	
	Manor	48
General Jeffraison	Wing	173
Constantine Phipps (dec'd)		174
The Hon. Robt. Wm. Pickwoad	Godwin	226
Stedman Rawlins	Phipps	uncult.
Stedman Rawlins	New Guinea	uncult.
The Hon. Wm. Wharton Rawlins	Walle	297
The Hon. Wm. Wharton Rawlins	Dry Hill	136
The Hon. Stedman Rawlins	Verchild's	234
The Hon. Stedman Rawlins	Williams	100
Earl Romney		158
Jn. Benj. Waterson	Vambell	223

Source:

Wm. McMahon's New Tropical Map of the Island of
St. Christopher, W.I., 1828.

Table 3.12
St. Kitts Private Estates 1898

<u>Proprietor</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>Acres</u>	
		<u>Cane</u>	<u>Uncult.</u>
<u>St. George</u>			
Heirs, C.B.Matthew	Buckleys	560	358
E. S. Wade	College	211	
W. Berridge	Farm		70
F. S. Wigley	Frigate Bay		500
J. Farrara	Mornes & Pond	647	131
Exec. S. A. Wade	Potato Bay		50
Sir H. M. Briscoe	Salt Pond		2314
J. H. H. Berkeley	Shadwell	203	147
<u>St. Peter</u>			
Colonel Cotton	Stapleton	469	247
W. A. Titley	Bayford	110	63
Heirs, C. H. Wade	Canada	401	480
Misses Pogson	Conaree	140	299
E. S. Wade	Douglas	309	104
W. S. Chambers	Fountain	30	154
Trustees, W. Napier & wife	Milliken	205	192
R. S. Clukies	Monkey Hill		136
J. Farara	Needsmust & Greathead	827	301
<u>Ste. Mary</u>			
Adamson & others	Brighton	404	223
Ewing & Co.	Cunningham	233	202
E. S. Wade	Green Hill	225	178
Ethelbert Wade	Hermitage	379	182
J. D. Adamson	Lodge	304	253
C. A. Smith	Ottley	101	196
P. A. Wade	White	116	88
<u>Nichola Town</u>			
S. Shelford	L'Bourryan	153	28
H. W. Estridge & others	Estridge	393	509
Misses Pogson	Hope	202	283
P. A. Wade	Mansion	394	415
J. B. Compton	Mills	293	121
M. Montgomery	Phillips	287	415
M. Montgomery	Molyneux	108	126
<u>St. John</u>			
Sarah H. Sinclair	Belle Vue	199	219
Ewing & Co.	(Bay) Dieppe	432½	242½
Exec. Mrs. Opherts	Harris		240
Mary Wade	Lavington	137	152
Misses French	Lynches	101	98
H. Margetson	Parson	183	158

(Table 3.12 cont)

<u>Proprietor</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>Acres</u>	
		<u>Cane</u>	<u>Uncult.</u>
Sarah H. Sinclair	Pogson	118	76
J. B. Yearwood	Profit	180	169
Anne Davis	Saddler		346
Alice Berkeley	Stone Castel	159	248
<u>St. Paul</u>			
B. S. Davis	Belmont	544	300
Heirs, C. Adamson	Brotherson	337	325
J. Farara	Fahies	180	146
C. H. Walwin & others	Mount Pleasant	160	146
Arabella Hardman	Newton	77	3
	Ramus		18
W. L. Adye	Willett	287	225
<u>Ste. Anne</u>			
Misses Pogson	Bourkes	542	263
Heirs of B. Greene	Cranstouns	485	214
J. Farara	Farm	345	248
S. F. S. Davis	La Vallee	138	4
J. Farara	Sir Gillies	189	47
<u>St. Thomas</u>			
J. Farara	Chalk Farm	112	68
Lee Crerar & Co.	Con Phipps	352	351
Misses Pogson	Godwin	211	301
E. C. Wattley	Hutchinson	60	335
S. F. S. Davis	Lamberts	303	280
Mrs. Schooles	New Guinea	26	72
J. Challenger	Titley		80
J. Farara	Vambelle	100	360
Chas. Roger & others	Wingfield	440	1124
<u>Trinity</u>			
J. Branch	Camp	226	244
R. Spence	Garvey	35	16
Misses Pigueuit	Mount Pleasant	45	121
W. R. Boon	Ottleys & Sone Fort	378	347
Cecilia Boon	Theroulds	70	49
Exec. W. W. Reid	West Farm	446	424
	Woodburn		40

 (Source: Great Britain, 1889:229-230)

amalgamation was rather complicated by the previous system between plantations, British merchant capitalist credit and the marketing system. Many planters were indebted to several sources, and competing claims to their property made it difficult to sell until the Encumbered Estates Act brought the establishment of one legal owner for each estate, and clarified the capital aspects of the new system under free labour. By 1896 the pattern of land use and ownership in St. Kitts was as follows:

Out of a total of 41,851 acres of land in St. Kitts, the amount deemed unsuitable for cultivation was estimated at 12,555 acres (30% of the total) in which 9,558 acres (22.8%) was covered with forest, leaving 29,196 acres of land accessible for cultivation. Of this area 18,385 acres (44%) was under cane cultivation in 1896. With the exception of 150 acres of Crown land, the bulk of the cultivable land (about 29,046 acres) was all in private hands. The distribution of property under private ownership was as follows:

Table 3.13
Distribution of Property by Size in St. Kitts 1898

<u>Size of Property</u>	<u>Number of estates</u>
Over 1,000 acres	3
Not less than 500 acres	23
Not less than 200 acres	25
Not less than 100 acres	10
Not less than 50 acres	6
Not less than 20 acres	2
Not less than 10 acres	1

(Source: Great Britain, 1898, Appendix C, Part 12:211-1)

Estates of non-resident ownership were mostly those of over 100 acres, being 27 estates (44%) with a total cane land holding of 15,440 acres (37% of total cultivable land). All the estates were owned by individuals or families with the exception of Ewing's Sugar Company in England, which owned 435 acres in a St. Kitts estate (and 729 acres, in Nevis).

Around 1860 St. Kitts had a clearly established old plantation system based on free labour. The immediate issue was how to produce the muscovado sugar at a competitive cost. Unlike the events of the 1840's when the introduction of cultivation machinery to substitute for field workers created labour shortages, the machinery brought in during the mid-1850's was aimed at cutting the cost of sugar production in the mills. The major emphasis was now upon new, powerful, and efficient machinery for the cane crushing mills, the old windmills and oxen power being replaced with steam mills and efficient evaporators. There were no steam mills in St. Kitts in 1825, but by the middle of the 19th Century there were thirty-three (Merrill, 1958:93) and seventy-four by 1878 (Hall, 1971: 11), indicating the rapid technological change in sugar production. The improvement of mills was the most costly alternative open to the owners in view of the ample supply of labour at low wages. For small estates cultivating less than 200 acres, there was simply no incentive nor sufficient capital to introduce steam mills, while windmill or cattle-driven mills simply could not extract the cane juice efficiently. It was claimed by one critic that only about a half of the cane's juice was extracted through the old method, and that the imperfect methods of boiling and curing wasted a further two-thirds of the juice, thus only about one-third of the sugar contained in cane reached the market (Hall, 1971:109). In contrast steam powered mills would extract 70% to 80% of the juice, and there would be less loss in the boiling and curing process when the new copper coils were used (these not being introduced until 1880).

These changes were accompanied by improvements in cane varieties and manuring practices. The older Bourbon varieties of cane were susceptible to the Shot Borer insect which had to be destroyed by setting fire to the sugar cane. This was replaced by the Caledonia Queen varieties in

1878 (Great Britain, 1898:218) which not only resisted the insect but also produced more juice. In St. Kitts manuring practices helped to increase yield further. Besides the chemical fertilizers, planters grew potatoes and pigeon peas, and before they matured the field was ploughed to provide green dressing (high in nitrogen) for the newly planted cane. This practice also seems to have signaled the end of the provision of ground for estate workers to grow food upon, except for very marginal and uncultivable areas (Great Britain, 1898:416). This led to the downfall of the tenancy system, and workers eventually depended entirely upon selling their labour in order to subsist.

Such measures as these had some limited success in meeting the competition of the world market, but there were only three small islands (St. Kitts, Antigua and Barbados) where sugar production reached pre-Emancipation level (see Table 3.14). In St. Kitts the sugar industry was enjoying prosperity under the old plantation system, based on the control of labour through the tenant-employee system and the lowest possible wages. For instance, the owner of the Peter Hall Estate stated in 1872 that St. Kitts plantations were enjoying the "zenith" of their prosperity and "were never so successfully cultivated as at the present time" (Beachy, 1957:42). This prosperity was, however, highly precarious. On the one hand, the price of sugar had been steadily declining, while on the other sugar production had been increasing rapidly.

The nature of changes in colonial sugar production was greatly influenced by the British duty scales. The high duties on refined sugar in preference to unrefined sugar meant that muscovado sugar producing areas were enjoying the two lowest rates of duty:-

Table 3.14

Sugar Production of St. Kitts 1704-1943

Year	Tons	Year	Tons	Year	Tons	Year	Tons
1704	132	1759	6,684	1839	6,777	1891	13,149
1706	410	1760	9,084	1840	4,719	1892	18,156
1707	798	1761	9,924	1841	3,196	1893	17,042
1708	671	1762	7,558	1842	4,781	1894	16,896
1709	647	1763	7,998	1843	3,868	1895	18,894
1710	1,571	1764	8,830	1844	5,985	1896	15,037
1711	947	1765	7,494	1845	6,138	1897	14,681
1712	997	1766	10,162	1846	4,551	1898	12,387
1713	1,932	1767	9,533	1847	7,518	1899	11,943
1714	1,739	1768	9,980	1848	4,017	1900	7,451
1715	1,889	1769	7,521	1849	4,682	1901	12,133
1716	4,092	1770	11,308	1850	3,535	1902	16,597
1717	4,012	1771	9,219	1851	6,101	1903	13,511
1718	1,654	1772	10,567	1852	4,712	1905	12,345
1719	4,072	1773	5,818	1853	5,095	1906	15,898
1720	4,597	1774	10,237	1854	7,042	1907	12,346
1721	3,653	1775	9,872	1855	5,589	1908	11,044
1722	5,652	1776	9,685	1856	5,182	1909	12,381
1723	6,055	1777	7,670	1857	4,568	1910	8,761
1724	4,775	1778	7,425	1858	7,962	1911	11,456
1725	4,437	1779	9,861	1859	5,833	1912	10,685
1726	6,358	1780	8,807	1860	8,261	1913	8,655
1728	8,282	1792	6,958	1861	7,730	1914	12,680
1729	7,936	1800	6,385	1862	8,346	1915	8,341
1730	8,120	1807	9,685	1863	10,034	1916	16,106
1731	8,725	1809	7,190	1864	4,845	1917	15,048
1732	9,086	1810	8,385	1865	10,500	1918	9,105
1733	9,895	1814	6,133	1866	13,100	1919	11,105
1734	7,717	1815	7,066	1867	11,000	1920	10,036
1735	9,526	1816	6,237	1868	12,600	1921	8,134
1736	8,867	1817	6,799	1869	9,700	1922	8,598
1737	4,865	1818	6,511	1870	13,500	1923	10,394
1738	7,301	1819	7,575	1871	13,800	1924	10,196
1739	8,528	1820	4,970	1872	5,826	1925	15,563
1740	5,284	1821	6,421	1873	7,476	1926	16,380
1741	6,791	1822	4,984	1874	5,923	1927	18,068
1742	5,650	1823	3,809	1875	7,388	1928	19,433
1743	7,452	1824	6,629	1876	7,267	1929	13,724
1744	7,051	1825	3,932	1877	5,364	1930	17,637
1745	9,552	1826	5,396	1878	9,776	1931	12,021
1746	7,659	1827	4,611	1879	8,802	1932	19,969
1747	4,518	1828	6,060	1880	9,045	1933	22,588
1748	8,789	1829	6,354	1881	9,636	1934	28,320
1749	7,701	1830	4,588	1882	12,488	1935	27,280
1750	8,218	1831	5,098	1883*	13,143	1936	34,272
1751	7,882	1832	4,030	1884	19,380	1937	27,935
1752	6,973	1833	4,019	1885	14,403	1938	37,336
1753	3,988	1834	5,267	1886	14,389	1939	30,892
1754	5,944	1835	4,380	1887	18,191	1940	37,186
1755	8,291	1836	3,240	1888	17,574	1941	33,061
1757	10,929	1837	3,663	1889	19,967	1942	32,162
1758	8,098	1838	4,679	1890	17,409	1943	27,622

*After 1883 production of Nevis included

(Source: Deerr, 1949:197)

Table 3.15

British Import Duties on Sugar 1864

<u>Type of Sugar</u>	<u>Charge/cwt.</u>
Refined sugar	12s. 10d.
Equal to white clayed	11s. 8d.
Not equal to white clayed	10s. 6d.
Equal to brown muscovado	9s. 4d.
Not equal to brown muscovado	8s. 2d.

(Source: Beachy, 1957: 44 - 45)

As noted, St. Kitts planters imported new steam mills but did not introduce the new boiling house equipment, except to replace the old open coppers and coolers with more efficient ones. Nor did they introduce centrifugal driers, vaccuum pans or steam-heated boilers which were very costly yet able to produce better quality sugar than muscovado. All the technological adaptations of the old plantation system were aimed essentially at producing larger quantities at cheaper cost, but with not much concern for improving the quality. This is partly explained by the incentive embodied in the import duties to produce the lower quality sugar required for British refineries. The fact that St. Kitts sugar could only reach British consumers through the British refineries was hardly beneficial for St. Kitts, for the refineries could not be expected to show any loyalty to St. Kitts muscovado producers. In fact, they eventually sought raw supplies wherever they could obtain the lowest prices. In 1845 raw sugar was selling in London at 22s. 6d. per cwt., and both Brazil and Cuba had sold at 20s. per cwt. for the past six years. Under this favourable condition England imported 197,450 cwt. of sugar from Cuba; by 1864 the figure was twenty times higher, being composed of 2,887,795 cwt. of the unrefined muscovado quality and 61,545 cwt. of the refined (Beachy, 1957:214). Furthermore there was an increasing penetration of the British market by the higher quality European beet sugar. As a result, the share of the Leeward Island musco-

vado sugar in the British market declined rapidly:

Table 3.16
Percentage of the British Market taken up by
Cane and Beet Sugar

<u>Year</u>	<u>% Cane Sugar</u>		<u>% Beet Sugar</u>
	<u>British</u>	<u>Foreign</u>	
1852	84.7	13.4	1.9
1880	28.4	41.0	20.6
1890	14.8	21.1	64.1

(Source: Hall, 1971:126)

Most of the British sugar refineries which depended upon the sugar from British colonies went out of business at the end of the 19th Century. In this fashion British West Indies sugar was forced out of the British market. After a series of meetings among the European capitalist nations the Bounty system which had been helping beet sugar was finally abolished (in 1903), but the effect of this severe competition and the resultant economic crisis in the British West Indies was such that Britain did not again become their major market until 1932.

Between 1884 and 1932 British West Indies sugar briefly found a market in the United States. When the United States instituted a 40% duty on foreign sugar in 1895 there was much difficulty in St. Kitts. One estate sold its 300 tons of sugar in New York at an average price of £8 18s. 11d. per ton; in 1896, 104 hogshead were sold at £6 6s. 10d. per ton. In short, all the estates in St. Kitts lost money in that year, and for many years to come. Even this market was lost when Cuba and Puerto Rico became American colonies after the 1898 Spanish-American War. Canada took up their sugar until about 1932 and, although small, this market provided some relief from an already severe economic crisis.

The question still remains as to why St. Kitts and the small Leeward Islands planters were unable to produce a more refined quality of

sugar that would compete effectively in the world market. It seems clear that one factor was the small scale of production which made massive capital investment uneconomical. None of the islands in the earliest sugar producing areas were able to attract the necessary capital from the British merchant capitalists other than for minimum necessary changes. This capital was being invested with greater profitability in the larger producing areas such as Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guyana and East India. In other words, the Leeward Island sugar production was no longer a prime concern of the British, and the area became increasingly marginal.

The survival of sugar production in these islands was therefore mainly dependent upon the cheapness, abundance and efficiency of labour throughout the last quarter of the 19th Century. In 1891 there were 30,876 people in St. Kitts (454 per square mile) and the old plantation system employed 10,718 (over 33%). The off-season daily wage rate was 10d. to 1s. per day (sunrise to sunset with 2½ hours for meals) for field labouring men, and 5d. to 6d. for women, usually working in small gangs at weeding and cultivating. During crop time the rate was 8d. per ton of sugar made, and each male worker could earn as much as 20 to 26 tons worth per week (14s. Od.). However, to meet increasingly difficult times, workers' wages were reduced in 1885 by 25% and the rate fell to 6d. per ton. The estates continued trying desperately to economize further, mainly by introducing machinery. In 1895 there was a strike over the wages paid by one estate, Fararer's, which resulted in a return of the general wage rate to 8d. per ton in 1897, although this was eventually reduced again to 6d. per ton. (The Farara Estate introduced a new clarifier at the mill which had a capacity of 600 gals., replacing the old 500 gal. one. At the mill workers were paid on a task basis, according to the number of clarifier

loads making up a ton of sugar. That calculation had been upset by the larger clarifier, so the workers demanded $\frac{1}{4}$ d. extra wages. When this was refused a strike resulted which spread throughout the island. The Estridge Estate manager Sheldon wrote about this strike, "Terrible riot about higher wages. Marines landed from gun-boat, fired on mob - killed three, wounded several. Cane fires everywhere - nothing to speak of at Estridge's. Have granted demands for higher wages. Men came at me with cutlasses - rural police joined mob - Basseterre and island in hands of mob - only about $\frac{1}{2}$ a dozen working in yard". (Furness, 1961:47).).

The political consequences of these trends were great. The workers' wages had been cut, their food-growing plots were being disallowed, and their instruments of labour had been replaced with machines. They were left with nothing but their labour to sell, but the more they sold and the more their productivity increased the more they began to realize that their labour value was decreasing, bringing them to ever greater poverty and misery (see Chapter Six for political analysis).

In short, the old plantation system of St. Kitts found itself in economic difficulties under the influence of the free trade policy and European beet sugar competition during the latter half of the 19th Century. One solution would have been to increase the scale of production with the adoption of modern technology, but estates in St. Kitts were too small to attract the necessary capital, were already economically hard-pressed by competition, and were therefore unable to change.

G. Summary

It has been shown that the St. Kitts old plantation system developed as a consequence of the world-wide emergence of a colonial and capitalist mode of production in the 18th Century. The labour force for the sugar

plantation system was secured through slavery, as there was neither sufficient nor willing labour available through European sources. From the beginning this system also entailed the dependence of the planters upon the capital of the British merchant capitalists, allowing the latter to monopolize the colonial trade and restrict it to Britain as a means to their own capital accumulation. However, coupled with British industrial development, the process of capital accumulation was eventually constrained by both slavery and restricted trade. The solution was to make political and economic changes towards freer trade in the colonies, the first step being the Emancipation of slaves in 1834. This Act provided the basis for the development of the old plantation system in St. Kitts, to which workers were tied through their tenant-employee relationship with the planters. The Sugar Duties Acts of 1846 and the West Indies Encumbered Estates Act of 1860 also helped to define the new nature of the dependence and the capital arrangement under which West Indian sugar had to compete with an ever increasing world sugar production, involving increased labour productivity and simultaneous price declines. When the British finally adopted free trade in 1874 economic crisis came to the West Indies, especially the smaller islands as their unit of production was smaller than those in other cane growing areas. They were hit further by increased competition from European beet sugar. St. Kitts planters were unable to improve the quality of their sugar production due to their inability to secure credit from the British capitalists who were now more interested in larger and more profitable areas. Under these circumstances small West Indian planters were powerless to prevent the diminution of their muscovado sales to British sugar refineries during the last quarter of the 19th Century, in spite of increased production at lower costs brought about by the intro-

duction of machinery and scientific cane cultivation. Powerless before the historic process of capital accumulation, the planters increased their sugar production and lowered their costs, but were faced with decreases in world sugar prices.

Another solution therefore had to be found to the problem of survival, and in view of the limitation of the small island and the size of its production units it had to be a collective effort rather than one based on individual estates. But the planters once again turned towards squeezing the workers, and as had been the case before all classes of Kittitians took the brunt of the economic crisis. The 1897 Royal Commission which came to the West Indies to examine this crisis estimated that the average drop of 40s. in production costs between 1884 and 1894 had been "wholly the result of the reduction of wages by approximately 30%" (Beachy, 1957:80). The Commission also observed the impoverished conditions of the workers, and recommended the development of peasant household agriculture to relieve the overdependence upon imported food, but this was not done for it meant changing the fundamental policy of land monopolization upon which the capitalists relied for a supply of cheap and abundant labour, and we have noted that this was the most important factor for survival of plantations in the small islands. However, the Commission also recommended the establishment of a centralized modern sugar factory with the financial assistance of the Colonial Office, hoping to thereby salvage the industry and to improve the social and economic conditions of the workers. Such a factory was established in 1912 and the next chapter will focus on this development of the St. Kitts organization of sugar production.

PART TWO

THE ORGANIZATION OF SUGAR PRODUCTION IN ST. KITTS

An understanding of the organization of sugar production in St. Kitts is necessary in order to understand political and social development in this century. Part Two will describe and analyse this organization of production, emphasizing those aspects most directly concerned with political and social class changes. Before going any further, however, an important distinction must be made in discussing the organization of sugar production: the difference between the estates sector and the factory sector of the plantation system.

The estates sector refers to the landed property on which sugar cane is cultivated. The factory sector refers to the mills or central factories where the sugar cane is crushed and the juice expressed and boiled into raw sugar and/or molasses. In the old plantation system, estates and factory sectors comprise a single unit; each plantation consisted of sugar cane fields and its own mills, powered at various times and according to the available capital of the plantation owners by wind, oxen or steam. In the modern plantation system the estates sector and the factory are separate units; not only geographically separate, but often under separate ownership as well. In the literature on plantations the former is sometimes called the engenho, and the latter the usina or centrale (Hutchinson, 1958). Such distinctions enable us to identify the crucial changes in St. Kitts economy and society.

In the two chapters which follow I will stress these points:

(a) technological and organization changes in the evolution of the old plantation system to the modern plantation system occur basically in the factory sector, with consequent changes in the relationship between

factory, labour and capital. This will form much of the content of Chapter Four.

(b) In the estates sector of the plantation system this evolution remains relatively conservative. There is greater continuity with the 19th Century technology and organization on estates, that is, there is greater continuity in the relationship between estate capital and estate labour than in the factory situation. This will form the content of Chapter Five.

In later chapters of this thesis we shall see the consequences which these changes (or lack thereof) in factory and estates sectors have for political development in St. Kitts, especially at the working class level. Further points to be stressed in Part Two, however, are:

(c) In the shift from the old to the modern plantation system, ownership and control of the factory sector remained in the hands of absentee foreign owners. This phenomenon is consistent with modern practices of economic or neo-colonialism, and will be dealt with in Chapter Four.

(d) In the shift from the old to the modern plantation system, however, the estates sector fell increasingly into the hands of local, resident owners, especially through the mechanism of Agency companies, and abetted by changes in the social class structure of St. Kitts. This phenomenon, which runs counter to the expectations of theorists of neo-colonialism, will be analysed in Chapter Five.

(e) The final point to be made in Part Two is that the estates sector of the modern plantation system is still economically and politically subordinate to the factory sector, in spite of local ownership. Furthermore, conflicts of interest between the two sectors often appear

to be anti-colonial conflicts, but in any event affect all aspects of political and social life in St. Kitts. The subordinate role of the estates sector will be discussed in Chapter Five, and the political and social consequences of this conflict will be dealt with in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FACTORY

A. Introduction

It is apparent from the content of the last chapter that changing world conditions, due mainly to rapid industrialization in Europe (and especially in Britain), brought about the demise of the old plantation system. In an attempt to protect both her own sugar refining industry and the colonial muscovado sugar production, Britain instituted a graduated duty system in 1864. The main effect of this policy was a rapid increase of sugar production in St. Kitts and a sharp fall in sugar prices on the world market, which led to the eventual crisis of the 1890's in the West Indies. West Indian muscovado sugar simply could not compete with the subsidized European bounty beet sugar, and was forced out of the British market. The policy also stimulated overproduction in Europe where the strategy of mass production for mass consumption and lower transport and marketing costs enabled the cheaper and more refined beet sugar to dominate the scene. Cane sugar production was first out-paced in 1874 and shortly after that the British refining industry was forced to a halt. The West Indies had depended upon these refineries for their ability to reach British households; they were now clearly forced to change their production to a more refined quality of sugar.

In 1896 St. Kitts cultivated 18,385 acres of sugar cane, giving a total export of 14,822 tons and earning £105,245. The 1882 figures had been 18,601 and £325,461 respectively. The differences in tonnage were at least partly due to seasonal differences, but in the main the prices were the most significant, as the following table shows:

Table 4.1
Comparison of Sugar Exports 1882 and 1896

	<u>1882</u>	<u>1896</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Tonnage	18,601	14,822	3,779 (20%)
Yield in \pounds	325,461	105,245	220,216 (67%)
Price per ton	\pounds 17 10s.	\pounds 7 2s.	\pounds 10 8s. (59%)

(Source: Great Britain, 1898, Appendix C, Part 12; 226)

These figures show the degree of economic crisis. The modernization of sugar production was therefore an absolute economic necessity for West Indian producers. In response, two fundamental aspects of the process were to change, concerning technology - to increase the efficiency of production, and organization - to control the problem of overproduction.

B. Major changes undergone

Under the old plantation system the sugar-making process consisted of several stages. First, the cane was crushed in a mill and then juice from the crushed cane was moved to the boiling house where it was boiled to extract the water and other impurities from the sugar. It was next transferred to a curing-house where muscovado sugar was finally made by separating out the molasses (which contains very little sugar). Some estates had a still-house where rum was made. In other words, sugar-making was done in three separate buildings; moreover there were other buildings to support the milling operations...various workshops housing skilled wheelwrights, carpenters, coopers, blacksmiths and masons, as well as sugar-storing sheds.

Muscovado sugar was a low grade sugar since the techniques used to make it permitted a large amount of molasses to escape the separation process. It was shipped by the barrel so that some of the molasses could often drain away during the voyage to Britain. One planter esti-

mated that his muscovado sugar contained 60% sugar and 40% molasses, and that as much as one-third of the weight was lost during the voyage. It was therefore highly desirable for the planters to upgrade the sugar content of their product through more efficient methods of boiling and curing. Between 1870 and 1880 the new copper coils were introduced (with a double process of inverting the boiled cane juice to separate the molasses from the sugar) and to help this process a clarifier (i.e. a special tank to effect separation) was eventually incorporated into the process. A better quality of muscovado sugar did result from these technological changes in St. Kitts, but the industry was still far from perfect as the planters had no reliable method for the inversion process. A very exact degree of control over the high temperatures involved in the evaporation process was required in order to convert the sugar to glucose in a fairly rapid manner; excessive heat burnt the cane juice. What was therefore required was a vacuum pan system which would handle the rapidly boiling cane juice at low temperatures, thus making possible the least amount of inversion without burning. (For a fuller description of the vacuum pan process see Beachy, 1957; Deerr, 1949). The economic advantages of the vacuum pan system can be seen in the reduction of the cost of sugar production:

...it is evident that the greatest reduction has been made on vacuum pan estates. The largest, Usine Ste. Madeleine in Trinidad, had reduced its cost of production by 50% during 1884 to 1894. In British Guiana vacuum pan sugar, which cost £16 per ton to produce in 1885, was being turned out for £9 per ton in 1892, the £7 saving made up of a £5 reduction in manufacturing costs and £2 in labour (Beachy, 1957:79).

According to various witnesses at the 1898 Royal Commission, it cost £9 11s. in St. Kitts and £9 1s. in Nevis to produce one ton of muscovado sugar, without including interest on capital or depreciation. If rum

and molasses were included, the cost went up to between £10 and £11 per ton without increasing profits, as planters often sold molasses at a loss.

However, St. Kitts planters had neither the financial means nor the necessary larger units of production needed to modernize their production and meet the severe economic depression they found themselves in. According to one estimate in 1878 the vacuum pan system required between £40,000 and £50,000 to produce 1,000 hogshead of refined sugar; the St. Kitts estates were simply unable to afford such a figure (Beachy, 1958).

This brings up the problem of organizational changes mentioned above. Consolidation and centralization of sugar production, including centralized mills, was unacceptable to many small West Indian sugar planters due to the centuries-old habit of competition among themselves which had been fostered under the British policy of restricting trade so that colonial sugar producers competed with each other for the largest share of the British market. (For example, during the Haitian Revolution West Indian sugar production was sharply reduced, for the British were unable to obtain sugar through the free port of Jamaica. The British encouraged sugar production in the colonies between 1825 and 1830, thus creating overproduction and rapidly falling prices in London. This dealt the final blow to the slave plantation system in the West Indies.)

Consequently, under colonial conditions St. Kitts planters had neither the technological nor the financial means to undertake modernization, nor would they agree to a consolidation of their estates. Change therefore originated in the metropolis and it is not surprising that the nature of the change was dictated by metropolitan interests. West Indian planters did eventually agree to the centralization of sugar manufacture,

but insisted on the maintenance of their separate estates.

The beginning of the St. Kitts modern plantation system lies in the 1912 opening of its central sugar factory at Basseterre, as was recommended by the 1898 Royal Commission. This recommendation was an integral part of a reorganization of the West Indian sugar industry which embodied the establishment of a centralized decision-making body, namely the West Indies Sugar Producers' Association. This organization would negotiate sugar marketing and prices on behalf of each of the sugar-producing islands, thus replacing their separate negotiations with the British Government. The British were thus assured of sugar deliveries and were moreover able to control the overproduction of sugar which had resulted from competition among the islands.

Centralization of the means of sugar production led to the decline of the old system of producing sugar in individual estate mills, and the development of the modern plantation system hinges upon it. Several factors are important in understanding these structural changes, and they also throw light upon the general process of change in the organization of capitalist production in the colonies:

(a) Metropolitan corporations control the organization of production (or the strategic sector of the organization of production through financial holdings) and their control increases at each stage of modernization, demanding increasing capital requirements.

(b) The majority, or even all, of the income for the metropolitan corporation which controls the organization of production in the colonies is derived from the colonies in the form of dividends and interest.

(c) After the initial stage of investment in production facilities the necessary capital requirements for the expansion of production in the

colonies is self-generating in the colonies, often exploiting and incorporating local financial resources (i.e. estate owners and merchants) rather than being infused from the metropolis.

This process of centralization of both production and decision-making was stimulated by the utilization of world developments in technology for production, transportation and communication. Under the present capitalist system, technological development enables men to create both wealth and an increasingly higher order of societal complexity, but these are limited by the social and political consequences of the metropolitan-satellite relationship.

C. Organization of the modern factory

(1) Ownership. The factory is owned and operated by the St. Kitts (Basseterre) Sugar Factory Company Limited (which I will refer to as the Factory Company), a public company registered in Britain. The organization of this company originally involved a scheme of dividing the subscription of factory stocks into "A" and "B" shares. The former are mostly common stock held by British investors who had purchased shares in the St. Kitts (London) Sugar Factory Limited (a holding company) as a business investment (I will refer to this company as the London Company). The single largest number of shares in the London Company are held by Henckell Du Buisson and Company Limited in London. This company controls the directorship of the London Company too, and represents it in a managerial capacity controlling the Factory Company. In 1927 "B" shares were allotted, but only to the owners of those estates contracting into the scheme and in proportion with the size of the cane deliveries they could provide. Thus through an interlocking financial arrangement between themselves and overseas capital, domestic cane suppliers (i.e. estate

owners) not only owned land and supplied cane but also held a half share in the Factory Company and were entitled to a half share of the factory profits.

Neither the Factory Company nor the London Company themselves owned or controlled any St. Kitts estates. However, Henckell Du Buisson manage the Molyneux Estate for a Mrs. James. By 1958 not all of the "B" shareholders were estate owners and were not therefore involved in supplying cane. Some owners did not participate in the 1927 agreement and did not hold shares. Due to the changing amount of acreage under sugar cane cultivation, still other owners were holding "B" shares proportionally too large or too small in relation to the cane they actually supplied. When they liquidated to the book value of their shares on 31st August 1953, "B" shareholders who owned estates agreed to restrict their interest in the Factory Company. They also agreed upon a clause for capitalization reserve, and that equal numbers of Deferred shares could be allotted, subject to bonus. 195,174 Deferred "A" shares were allocated to the London Company, and 195,174 Deferred "B" shares to the contracting estates in St. Kitts, thus making possible an additional investment of funds into the Factory Company and the distribution of "B" shares in proportion to the size of the estates and their cane production. The distribution of Deferred "B" shares among estates is based on one share per 10 tons for the preceeding five years (up to August 31st 1958).

The St. Kitts Sugar Installation Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Factory Company. This company was created in 1959 to obtain the capital necessary for part of the major production expansion, involving the construction of mechanized bulk storage facilities in the Basseterre pier.

Since 1959 the financial structure of the factory operation has therefore consisted of three companies made up as follows:

(a) The St. Kitts (Basseterre) Sugar Factory Limited has a total issued capital of £646,848 which has been divided into (i) 65,000 "A" Ordinary shares at 1s. each, 195,174 "A" Deferred shares at 20s. each, 250,000 8% Redeemable (1947-89) Cumulative Preference shares, and (ii) 65,000 "B" Ordinary shares at 1s. each and 195,174 "B" Deferred shares at 20s. each.

(b) The St. Kitts (London) Sugar Factory Limited has a total of £390,000 issued capital based on 390,000 Ordinary 20s. shares.

(c) Sugar Installations Limited has a total issued capital of \$1,250,000 which consists of (i) 50,000 Ordinary shares at \$1 each which are all owned by the St. Kitts (Basseterre) Sugar Factory Limited, and (ii) 1,200,000 8% Redeemable (1974-89) Cumulative Preference shares at \$1 each. Of the latter, 700,000 were sold to the public in St. Kitts in 1960, and 250,000 are held by the London Company "A" shareholders. The remaining 500,000 have been distributed to the contracting estates according to tonnage production as part of the Rehabilitation claim over a period of time.

All stocks have been issued at par value with the following provisions:

(a) Ordinary "A" and "B" shares are fixed at 5% dividend per year;

(b) "B" Deferred shares are fixed at ¼% dividend per year; and

(c) "A" Deferred shares receive the remainder of the profits of the Factory Company after allocating 50% of the net proceeds.

In the event of liquidation, the Preference shares have the first

priority to be repaid at par value plus a premium, Ordinary shares have the next priority to be paid at 20s. 8d. per 1s. share (the book value of the share on August 31st 1953), and Deferred shares receive the balance.

In spite of the fact that the equity of the Factory Company is divided equally into "A" and "B" shares, the London Company effectively controls the Factory Company and Sugar Installations Limited through the 250,000 Preference shares it holds in both companies. As already mentioned, Henckell Du Buisson in turn controls the London Company by owning most of the shares. They also control the Board of Directors of the Factory Company and manage all three related companies. In order to further modernize the factory the 1959 financial reorganization of the Factory Company involved a tightening of control by the London Company through monopoly control of the Preference shares. This can be clearly illustrated by further examining the modernization of the factory and the attendant capital requirements:

Since World War II capital requirements for expanding production have been raised from both profits and reserves, and through issuing additional shares.

Table 4.2

Factory Capital Requirements 1947-1959

	<u>Amount in £</u>
Depreciation	204,042 (18%)
Reserve for replacement of fixed assets	225,000 (20%)
Rehabilitation Fund	330,075 (30%)
Loan from Rehabilitation Fund	104,167 (10%)
Other creditors	239,684 (22%)
Miscellaneous and Sales	4,651 -
	<hr/> 1,107,619 (100%) <hr/>

(Source: St. Kitts, Sugar Commission Report, 1967:49)

Thus, over 68% of investment into the factory came from internal sources. Most of the increased investment in the factory occurred after 1953 to aid expansion in response to the post World War II sugar shortage. More important, this came after the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement in 1951 which guaranteed the St. Kitts sugar production and prices - i.e. profits. The remainder of the investments (especially the loans which amounted to 32%), and an additional £160,000 for building the bulk sugar installation in 1959, was covered by Preference share issue of £500,000. Between 1959 and 1963 the factory capital requirement was further increased from the following sources:

Table 4.3

Factory Capital Requirements 1959-1963

	<u>Amount in £</u>
Reserves for Capital Expenditure	60,000 (7%)
Rehabilitation Fund	199,000 (24%)
Preference Redemption	54,000 (7%)
Miscellaneous	5,000 (1%)
Preference share issues	500,000 (61%)
	<hr/>
	818,000 (100%)

(Source: St. Kitts, Sugar Commission Report, 1967:49)

Thus, from 1947 to 1963 the factory increased its fixed assets and stores by £1,663,964 and £190,715 respectively. The increase in fixed assets was financed through depreciation (£334,000) and through an increase in capital and reserves (£413,000). The Rehabilitation Fund served as an important source of investment: 30% between 1947 and 1959, and 24% between 1959 and 1963. This fund was created as part of the Cess Fund in 1947 and provided for a levy of 55s. (\$13.20) on every ton of sugar exported. This amount was divided into three parts; a Rehabilitation Fund got 10s., a Price Stabilization Fund got 25s., and a Labour Welfare

Fund got 20s. This was changed in 1968 and again in 1969, when the Sugar Export Cess (Special Wages Insurance Fund Act 1969) was created.

In recent years the factory's capital requirements have been met through all these mechanisms, under the control of the London Company, and of course of Henckell Du Buisson in their turn. It is apparent that the necessary capital requirements have therefore been met mostly through profits from the operation of the Factory Company in St. Kitts. The entire income of the London Company is derived from the Factory Company's operations. Between 1947 and 1959 the London Company received about £558,000 in net profits (after tax), an annual average of £46,500. Between 1960 and 1965 its receipts were £232,000, an annual average of £46,400. The London Company retained a total of £395,000 between 1947 and 1965 (out of a total income of £790,000) for reinvestment in the Factory Company.

The forms which the London Company's investment in the factory took were various; a loan, bank overdraft facilities through its guarantee, a cash fund, and the provision of additional capital by acquiring additional cumulative redeemable Preference shares. This guaranteed profits to London:

Table 4.4

Average Annual Income (after tax) of
London Company from Factory
(in £'s)

<u>Years</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Preference Dividends</u>	<u>"A" Ordinary & Preferred Shares Dividend</u>	<u>Total</u>
1948-59	3,600	-	41,700	45,300
1960-63	2,900	9,200	31,200	43,300
1964	-	12,300	26,000	38,300
1965	-	12,000	5,800	17,800

(Source: St. Kitts, Sugar Commission Report, 1967)

Table 4.5

Period of Sugar Cane Harvest 1955 - 1965

<u>Year</u>	<u>Size of crop (tons of cane)</u>	<u>Starting date</u>	<u>Factory hours out of cane</u>	<u>Length of crop (weeks)</u>	<u>Closing Date</u>
1955	401,900	Feb. 10	194	26	Aug. 18
1956	437,100	Feb. 8	343	30	Aug. 26
1957	363,200	Feb. 5	401	26	Aug. 2
1958	385,400	Feb. 21	401	27	Aug. 31
1959	415,400	Jan. 23	415	28	Aug. 5
1960	437,600	Feb. 1	695	32	Sep. 12
1961	396,500	Feb. 3	1,303	34	Sep. 30
1962	417,700	Feb. 28	513	30	Sep. 29
1963	350,700	Feb. 1	435	25	July 27
1964	377,500	Feb. 24	222	24	Aug. 13
1965	342,200	Mar. 26	192	22	Aug. 28

(Source: St. Kitts, Sugar Commission, 1967)

and strengthened the London Company's control over the factory in St. Kitts, since Preference shares have the first priority for payment at par plus premiums in the event of liquidation.

(2) Operation. The modernization of the factory, especially after 1953, led to improvements in the railway, railway sidings, and mechanized bulk sugar storage facilities at the Basseterre pier and in production capacity.

(1) With the milling plant advanced in years in 1951, the Directors thought it necessary to replace it and certain other major assets. An extensive renewal program was therefore started in the 1950's, which is not expected to be completed until about 1970. This category took the major share of capital expenditure in the 1950's, but less than half in 1961-65. (2) Certain peripheral modernization and development projects have been undertaken. The railway was dieselized in the 1950's. Bulk storage installation was introduced. A new method of disposing of surplus bagasse was adopted. (3) The major share of capital expenditure in the 1960's, more than £350,000, was explained as being necessary principally to make good the shortages of labour being encountered on the estates in the late 1950's and early 1960's. The main heads of expenditure were sidings, cranes, cane slings, etc. (£120,000) and cane trucks and conversions (£65,000). There was also some miscellaneous expenditure in the factory itself amounting to at least £65,000. (4) This category concerns expenditure planned for the period 1966-70. More than 80% of the expenditure planned will be on rehabilitation and provision of capacity necessary to handle an hourly grinding rate of 150 tons of cane. The decision to increase the hourly grinding rate, from 125 tons to 150 tons, was explained as follows. The optimum length of crop was about 6 months, and the factory should be able to process the crop, at an even rate, within that period. One consideration was that, in four years, the estates had been able to harvest sufficient cane to give more than 50,000 tons of sugar. Thus factory capacity had to be capable of producing at least 50,000 tons of sugar in a year. Again, the General Manager of the factory pointed out that in 1964 and 1965, with an hourly grinding rate of 125 tons, there were occasions when it was difficult for the factory to deal with the flow of cane from the estates. The crops in these two years

were not large, yet in 1964 the factory had to work for 12 extra Sundays to cope with the flow of cane; in 1965, three extra Sundays were worked. Mr. Du Buisson said that the decision to increase the grinding rate to 150 tons an hour was taken principally on the considerations stated above. In fact, the planned changes will allow the factory to process 55,000 tons of sugar in 5½ months and 60,000 in 6 months. The 60,000 tons capacity was described as a by-product of rehabilitation and not as a key part of some grand design (St. Kitts, Sugar Commission Report, 1967:42-43).

As a result of modernization the factory increased its capacity to grind cane to 3,000 tons per day, or 18,000 tons per week. For a total of 26 weeks during the harvest season the capacity was 468,000 tons of cane, yielding 50,000 tons of sugar. In this manner, modernization shortened the harvesting season and improved the productivity of labour (see Table 4.5 overleaf).

Table 4.6

Comparative Factory Productivity
between 1961 and 1965

	<u>1961</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>Dec-</u> <u>rease</u>	<u>Inc-</u> <u>rease</u>
1. Length of harvest (wks)	34	22		35%
2. Size of harvest (tons)	396,500	342,200		14%
3. Factory hrs. out of cane	1,303	192		85%
4. Average tonnage of cane processed per week	11,662	15,555	33%	
5. Item 3 converted to a wk:3 shifts of 8 hrs/day, 5½ days/wk.	12	1½		
6. Net length of harvest (wks)	24	20½		
7. Net factory productivity	16,521	16,693	0.01%	

(Source: St. Kitts, Sugar Commission Report, 1967)

The productivity of labour increased (9% more sugar produced per man per week in 1965), but this was mainly due to the elimination of inefficiency at the factory by radically reducing the time that the factory was out of cane rather than to production increase. This was achieved mainly by

mechanizing the transportation of cane to the factory rather than increasing factory capacity at this stage. Factory capacity had no appreciable effect at this stage, partially due to the major problem of the transportation bottleneck which existed before. The railway facilities were therefore also expanded; dieselization was introduced to handle an additional 1,000 tons per week (from 2,975 tons in 1961 to 3,924 tons per week in 1965) and the number of railway sidings was increased from nine to twelve, with the addition of crane lifting equipment (see Figure 2).

The centralization of the factory operation and its increased efficiency led to the increasing importance of the production schedule and transportation logistics. Chapter Five will show how this change placed the estates in an increasingly subordinate position. Another result of the recent modernization is that factory operations have become highly automated. We will now examine the factory organization of labour.

(3) Division of labour. During the harvest season the factory employs about 800 people, including workers and salaried personnel, and the operations continue on a twenty-four hour basis:

Table 4.7
Classification of Factory Labour in 1969
Harvest Season

	<u>Number</u> <u>Employed</u>		<u>Number</u> <u>Employed</u>
No. 1 shift	58	Masons	10
No. 2 shift	57	Building Mechanics	9
No. 3 shift	59	Sugar store misc.	17
Building day workers	30	Locomotive running	85
Machine shop	52	Sidings	72
Welding shop	30	Other railway and	
Electric shop	30	line maintenance	105
Carpenter shop	18	Factory pier	18
Service station	66	General office	22
Porters	18	Monthly payroll	11
Gardeners	25	Brought forward	467
Watchmen	11		
General store	24		
	<u>467</u>	TOTAL:	<u>816</u>

During the dull season about 600 essential personnel are employed, mostly skilled or semi-skilled workers engaged (eight hours a day) in taking machines apart to clean and repair them, and sometimes in the installation of new machines in preparation for the next season. Usually two months before the factory re-starts operations, railway operating and repair crews work on the railway and sidings.

During the operating season, the major activities at the factory may be very briefly described as follows: When sugar cane reaches the factory by boxcars, it is automatically weighed and the boxcar is tilted sideways to unload the cane mechanically. Once the cane has been unloaded and before it is ground by the big rotating crushers to separate the juice content from the fiber, it is carried by conveyor and shaken to loosen dirt and small stones. Part of the fiber is used as fuel to heat the boiler, and the rest is used as mulch. The juice is collected in a large pan and is heated in three different processes before it passes through evaporators, vacuum pans, and centrifugal separators to crystalize out brown sugar (by an inversion process); the remainder is molasses. The brown sugar is then carried by conveyor to a waiting railway tank car and carried away to the bulk storage facilities at the pier to be exported.

With regard to the working relationship among workers in the factory, this has changed as a result of modernization and can now be described as a situation of more intensive exploitation and alienation. The majority of the workers are black, but most of the thirty-three people in the general office and employed for the monthly payroll are white, from Britain or New Zealand. The General Manager is also hired in Britain on a long-term contract, in the same way that most of the production engineers are recruited by the London Company on the basis of a contract of

a few years. The eleven people working on the monthly payroll, and the secretaries, are mostly white Kittitians. In short, the key positions are held by white people alone, with the exception of the workers in the area of sugar crystallization, who although black are not Kittitians.* This exception can perhaps be partially explained by the fact that Guyanese have been trained to handle the vacuum pan process for three hundred years and are therefore probably the best available. The supervisors of even these skilled workers are, nevertheless, white technicians from New Zealand and Britain. The workers from St. Kitts are therefore categorized as semi-skilled and have scarcely any opportunity to learn greater skills through work and advancement.

The caste-like hierarchical relationships** and the exploitation of the Kittitian workers is a very strong source of the resentment which underlies working class politics in this society. For this reason the St. Kitts-Nevis Trades and Labour Union movement is organized basically by the factory workers, and has been maintained by them since its inception in 1938 (see Chapter Six).

The most recent struggle by the Kittitian workers involved a three-week strike during December 1969, when the young apprentices of the factory walked off their jobs; their grievance was basic exploitation. Over thirty young people around sixteen years old, bright students who have completed

* They are skilled Guyanese migrant workers, recruited by the factory. As soon as the harvest season is over they move to other islands where the harvest season is then beginning.

**Only white technicians and supervisors live in the factory residences. The factory owns the only golf course which is located in the immediate area. In addition, the tennis court is located in the vicinity of the factory, but admission is open only to members. Even if black people are of very high rank, they are simply not eligible for membership.

nine years of secondary schooling, are selected annually by the factory as apprentices. Their training lasts five years and culminates in their receiving certificates. In principle they do classroom learning in the mornings and factory work in the afternoons, or vice versa. The latter (and training) concerns the areas of machine shop, welding, electrician shop and carpentry, as well as locomotive running. They receive very little money during the period in question and are not allowed to join the Union. Several of the apprentices whom I interviewed claimed that in spite of the successful completion of five years' training the factory did not guarantee them a job in the area they were trained for; this was substantiated by one of the factory supervisors. No more than a dozen at the most had been hired by the factory in any given year. They felt therefore that they were "modern slaves"; some of them had done a great deal of hard work but very little learning in the course of their apprenticeship. They had been exploited in a way that other workers, who are protected by Union rules, could not be, especially for example in clearing the bottleneck caused by modernization in the bringing in of cane during each production shift. Eventually some apprentices were able to join the Union and demanded improvements in their position at the factory, but they were then threatened with expulsion. This resulted in a walk-out by the entire body of apprentices, with the official sanction of the Union. The factory was then forced to abolish the exploitative apprenticeship scheme and all workers are now entitled to join the Union.

D. Marketing of factory output

Under the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement each metropolitan country has its own protected quota and supply from its dependent colonial areas. Since 1965 the basic export quota for the St. Kitts sugar factory has been

41,000 tons of sugar. This is broken into two categories: 33,000 tons are guaranteed both in market and in price to the United Kingdom through a Negotiated Price Quota of £46 11s. 6d. per ton (in 1965), which is much higher than the world market prices, and 8,000 tons are allocated as a Free Quota (see Tables 4.8 and 4.9) which also has guaranteed market protection, usually in the United Kingdom and/or Canada, and for which the price is based upon the world market price plus tariff preferences. The Free Quota price amounted to about £26 14s. 5d. per ton in 1965. The Negotiated Price is fixed for three-year periods and for the years 1966, 1967 and 1968 it was fixed at £43 10s. 0d. per ton, the colonies and "underdeveloped" areas receiving an additional special compensation of £1 10s. 0d. per ton. Beyond the fixed quota at fixed price, the sugar producing countries may not export except within the confines of the Free Quota; in this way the British can manipulate the colonies. The Negotiated Price itself is negotiated between the British and the West Indian Sugar Producers Association, and is determined by the following calculations:

Table 4.10
Negotiated Price Calculations

<u>World Price f.o.b.</u>	<u>Variable element</u>
Less than £31	50 s.
Over £31 and under £33	45 s.
Over £33 and under £35	40 s.
Over £35 and under £37	35 s.
Over £37 and under £39	30 s.
Over £39	nil

(Source: St.Kitts, Sugar Commission Report, 1967)

The amount of the variable element is determined in April of each year on the basis of the average world price as established by the International Sugar Council for the preceeding months (March of the preceeding year to April 1st of any current year). For example, the Negotiated Quota

TABLE 4.8 SALES OF SUGAR AND MOLASSES
(‘000 tons)

Year or Average	Negotiated Price	Quota	Free Quota	Local Quota	U.S.A. Quota	Total Sugar Sales	Molasses ('000 gal)
1957-60	30.1		10.2	4.5	0.8	45.6	1,961.70
1961-65	31.5		6.2	4.3	-	41.9	1,951.90
1961	30.7		11.6	4.1	-	46.4	1,971.40
1962	30.6		7.6	4.4	-	42.6	1,821.50
1963	30.4		4.7	4.2	-	39.3	1,624.90
1964	32.2		6.3	4.4	-	42.9	1,516.70
1965	33.6		0.4	4.3	-	38.3	1,318.80

TABLE 4.9 GROSS PROCEEDS FROM SALES OF SUGAR AND MOLASSES
(percentages)

Year or Average	Negotiated Price	Quota	Free Quota	Local Quota	U.S.A. Quota	Premiums etc.	Molasses
1957-60	64	-	-	-	2	-	3
1961-65	72	12	12	9	-	4	3
1961	67	19	19	8	-	4	2
1962	71	12	12	9	-	5	3
1963	67	12	12	9	-	6	6
1964	70	13	13	10	-	3	4
1965	86	1	1	10	-	1	2

(Source of both tables: St. Kitts,
Sugar Commission Report, 1967:95)

Basic Price per ton for 1966 to 1968 was £43 10s. Od.

Table 4.11

Breakdown of Negotiated Price Calculation

Basic Price	£43 10s. Od.
Preference (underdeveloped areas)	£1 10s. Od.
	£45 0s. Od.
Less Stevedoring	8s. Od.
	£44 12s. Od.
Special Payment (based on low world market price)	£2 10s. Od.
Total Net Negotiated Quota Price	£47 2s. Od.

(Source: St. Kitts, Sugar Commission Report, 1967:956
and Bookers' Survey, 1968)

Thus, a minimum of £1,584,000 income from the Negotiated Quota was guaranteed for the years 1966 through 1968. This was a time when the St. Kitts proportion of the Negotiated Price Quota was increased by what is known as the Shortfall Quota because of the inability of other members to fulfil their quotas. Besides these two categories St. Kitts sugar is also set aside for local consumption and export to surrounding islands. These quotas are 2,100 tons and 2,200 tons, and the prices are £40 and £46 per ton respectively. If St. Kitts produces sugar beyond her quota requirements she is allowed to export it to the United States. In 1964 this was only 3% of the total St. Kitts annual production (and was sold at £40 per ton), which is a very small amount in view of the island's productive capacity. For example, if St. Kitts produced 50,000 tons in a given year, the export quota to the United States would be 1,500 tons; this quota has only been taken up in 1953, 1956 and in 1960. St. Kitts is allowed to sell to the world market if she has surplus production beyond all the quotas described, but this would require an output of between 50,000 and 60,000 tons of sugar annually - well beyond her capacity under present

conditions. Moreover, the price on the world market (around £18 per ton) makes it uneconomical to increase productive capacity.

In short, the sugar market is subsidized through tariffs, quotas and preference prices based upon the need of the metropolitan countries, which creates a situation of total dependency among the colonized areas. This is more evident and critical in times of a declining economy. For example, the dependence of St. Kitts sugar exports on the Negotiated Quota price rapidly increased from 64% between 1957 and 1960 to 85% in 1965. Dependency on the local quota also increased proportionately. Beyond the 41,000 tons guaranteed quota, the low world price makes it impossible to increase production. This does not mean that a low world price for sugar is based on demand and supply. Each consuming country (usually metropolitan) controls the sugar supply through quotas and artificially fixes a low world market price. This pattern of manipulating developing areas is the same as occurs with coffee, cocoa and minerals. The consuming, metropolitan countries also control the market indirectly through the general dependency relationships they maintain with the colonies. In this way the productive capacity of the developing areas is controlled, as is their ability to industrialize.

The operation of imperialism and capitalism can be easily recognized here, with their strangle-hold on developing areas through commodity and price manipulation using various national and international market restrictions. Under the present system, guaranteed quotas and prices usually cover only areas where sugar production is controlled by the metropolitan capitalists, so that it is they who benefit from the guarantees and subsidies, as is clearly the case with the St. Kitts sugar factory. Furthermore, in the long run the metropolitan countries do not in effect

pay for the apparent subsidization of their sugar production concerns in the colonies, for they supplement their supply of sugar from these areas with substantial supplies obtained elsewhere at an artificially low world price (which they force through their manipulation of prices and quotas). In short, the present arrangement benefits only the controllers of metropolitan sugar production concerns in the colonies.

E. Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown what was involved in the establishment of the centralized sugar factory at Basseterre in 1912. While the sugar industry in St. Kitts could probably not have survived at all without the improvements in sugar quality brought about by the centralized approach to modernization, the system which now exists continues the tradition of the old plantation system, in that it serves the interests of investors in Britain rather than those of the people of St. Kitts itself. This is most apparent in the patterns of share ownership in the Factory Company, it is reflected in the sharp discrimination between privileged and exploited which the division of labour embodies, and it may be seen in the arrangements for marketing the sugar produced. A similar pattern may be found in the estates sector of the St. Kitts economy, which I will describe in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ESTATES SECTOR: ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS

A. Introduction

In this chapter I will describe the estates sector of the modern plantation system in St. Kitts. In spite of varied patterns of ownership modern St. Kitts estates are integrated into the St. Kitts sugar industry and into the world economy through the operation of the agency system (which is explained below). I will show how (in Section B) this sector is at present characterized by a declining number of estates and their transference from absentee, foreign ownership (which was usual for the old plantation system) to local ownership. At the same time, management control is organized through the local merchants and their attorneys under the agency system. In the modern plantation system, absentee ownership is confined to the factory sector where capital is concentrated, while at the same time the factory dominates the whole sugar industry through the demands of cane delivery logistics. Moreover, the estate owners are dependent upon British capitalists (i.e. the absentee factory owners) even though they themselves form the dominant economic class in St. Kitts.

With regard to the structure of management, the estates sector does not differ much from the pattern of the old plantation system. There appeared to be no necessity nor desire to change from the relationship of dependence by the estates upon the factory. Managers, attorneys and overseers also operated the estates in the old manner (Section C). The operation of the estates reflects not only their dependence upon the factory but also the limited application of technology in this sector. Only the transportation equipment is fully mechanized, since this part of opera-

tions is required to coordinate directly with factory production, while in the area of actually cultivating sugar cane methods are still labour intensive and have not basically changed from the methods of the old plantation system of the late 19th Century, apart from the side-effects that modernizing transport has had. Nevertheless there have been some radical changes in the overall operation of estates, in so far as they have been forced to abandon the cultivation of any land which is not readily accessible to tractors and mechanized cane loaders; cultivation is therefore intensified and concentrated into smaller areas. The organization of the work force has also changed from the gang system of task work to a greater dependence of individual workers upon their own efforts and their own earnings; the consequent pressure, especially on cutters, has become very intense and even more oppressive than it was under the old system (Section D).

These changes have had an adverse effect on estates' profits. There has been a growing exodus of workers from the estates to other islands and occupations, preventing them from being able to meet the delivery quotas set by the factory. Since this has affected its efficiency, factory profits have been declining. The Factory Company protected its own interests first, through a series of depreciations and claims of other operating costs out of revenues. Since the estates' earnings depend upon the size of factory revenues, they have been seriously reduced too (Section E). The future of the estates sector is indeed not bright, and there has been at least one proposal to change its entire organization and operations under a modern agro-business approach. This proposal has not yet been accepted by the estate owners, and they continue to experience serious economic difficulties (Section F).

B. Estate ownership and management

There are thirty-eight operational sugar estates in St. Kitts, four of which are owned by government and cultivated by small cane farmers. Since one of these government estates was purchased in 1969 (during the period of field work), it will be considered in the category of private estates:

Table 5.1

Estates owned by St. Kitts Government

Name	Acres under cultivation	Total cane yield in 1968 (tons)	Average yield per acre (tons)
Fahies	86	2,483	28.87
Harris	56	1,285	22.95
Saddlers	102	2,169	21.26
Total	244	5,937	

(Source: Bookers' Survey, 1968)

Thus, thirty-eight estates can be said to follow the plantation pattern, the major features of which are the existence of a dependent labour force and private ownership of the means of production (land and capital).

These thirty-eight privately owned estates are the major suppliers of sugar cane to the factory, and they occupy more than two-thirds of the total 42,000 acres of land on St. Kitts (see Tables 5.2 and 5.3). Considering the non-agricultural soils at the southern end of the island, the mountain and high ranges, these estates occupy practically all the land suitable for sugar cane production. They employ over 4,000 workers. Land use on these estates in 1965 was as follows:

Table 5.2
Family Owned Estates in 1968

<u>Estate</u>	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Average cane Cultivation (acres)</u>	<u>Total Production Tonnage</u>	<u>Average yield per acre (tons)</u>
Low. Bourryeau	C. Jordan	132	4,217	31.95
Brighton	Yearwood	404	12,331	30.53
Brothersons	A.H.Davis	432	12,242	28.34
Caines	Blake	670	19,256	28.74
Canada	Wade (UK)	116	1,924	16.57
College & Douglas	Wade (UK)	369	6,570	17.81
Conaree	Bynore	22	412	18.73
Cunyngham	Wade	212	4,557	21.50
Fountain	Berkley (UK)	90	2,369	26.32
Garveys	Dyer	34	305	11.09
Franklands	Dickenson	122	2,369	26.32
Greenhill	Lambert	160	2,782	17.40
Hermitage & Whites	Wade (UK)	309	7,458	24.14
Lavington & Lynches	Morris & Sebastian	286	8,424	29.45
Mansion	Wade (UK)	312	11,420	36.60
Milliken	Napiers	144	3,629	25.20
Molyneux	James (UK)	402	14,473	36.00
Mount Pleasant	Walwyn	152	4,364	28.34
Ottleys	Carson (USA)	127	4,140	32.60
Pond & Needsmust	Farara	696	10,199	14.65
Shadwell	Berkley (UK)	186	3,762	20.23
Sir Gillies	Farara	180	5,419	30.11
Stapleton	G.P.Boon	370	9,722	26.28
Bungalow	Gumbs	50	1,060	21.20
Willets	Blake	502	15,067	30.01
Wingfield	G.P.Boon	284	8,500	29.93
 TOTAL:		 6,765	 176,789	

(Source: Bookers' Survey, 1968)

Table 5.3

Corporate Owned Estates in 1968

<u>Estate</u>	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Average cane Cultivation (acres)</u>	<u>Total Production Tonnage</u>	<u>Average yield per acre (tons)</u>
Belmont	B.B.Davis Co.	480	17,789	37.07
Bourkes	Thurston Co.	381	6,889	18.08
Buckleys	Thurston Co.	455	10,885	23.75
Con Phipps	R.Kwaja Co.	332	7,834	23.60
Cranston & Lavalley	Horsford Co.	647	17,379	26.86
Cappesterre	Thurston Co.	800	26,665	33.33
Farm	Blake (St. Kitts Ltd)	264	7,211	27.50
Lambert & Godwin	Horsford Co.	396	9,930	25.08
Lodge & Upper Bourryeau	Thurston Co.	357	12,706	35.59
New Guinea & Chalk Farm	Losada	151	2,635	17.45
Stonefort	Horsford Co.	310	6,159	19.87
West Farm & Camp	Thurston Co.	520	11,816	22.72
TOTAL:		4,712	131,009	

(Source: Bookers' Survey, 1968)

Table 5.4

1965 Land Use on Private Estates

	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Cane cultivation	14,000	52
Cotton	550	2
Food crops	2,300	9
Stock	1,150	4
Other (unspecified)	9,000	33
TOTAL	27,000	100

(Source: St. Kitts Sugar Association, 1966-1967)

Due to the political and economic conflicts between the St. Kitts Government and the sugar industry, it is difficult to obtain accurate information on current estate ownership and on the size of holdings other than lands cultivated in sugar cane. On the basis of published sources and interviews, however, it appears that St. Kitts differs from other West Indian sugar producing areas in having fewer foreign and absentee estate owners. The majority of estate owners are Kittitian "whites" and until very recently the non-resident ownership of estates was insignificant (with the exception of the Molyneux Estate which is controlled for its British owner by Henckell Du Buisson). In 1969 five estates controlled by the Wade family were sold to the London Company, and there have been further rumours about the possible sale of other important estates. What little foreign or absentee ownership there has been did not present problems in controlling the supply of sugar cane, for actual management was undertaken by the Agency companies. There have been quite a few American companies seeking to purchase sizeable parcels of land for possible real estate development connected with tourism and winter homes for retirees. Moreover, there has been growing pressure on the Government to nationalize

the sugar industry due to poor production performances for several years, the loss of money by many estates (over 60% in 1969) and the uncertain future of the sugar industry as the result of British entry into the Common Market.

In 1968 there were three kinds of estate ownership in St. Kitts, land usage on which can be seen from the following table:

Table 5.5
Estate Ownership and Cane Cultivation in 1968

	<u>No. of Estates</u>	<u>Cane Cultivated acreage</u>	<u>Tonnage of cane produced</u>
Government	3	244	5,937
Family or individual	23	6,765	176,789
Corporation	12	4,712	131,009
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	38	11,721	313,735

(Source: St. Kitts Sugar Association, 1966-1967)

After the establishment of the centralized sugar factory in 1912, there were sixty-one estates controlled entirely by individuals or families, and none by corporations. The trend towards corporate estate ownership which has followed centralization did not become significant until after the Factory Company's structural changes in 1959. Although there had been changes of ownership before then, they affected mostly small and unimportant estates; the number of family controlled estates remained constant until after 1960. The Cappesterre Agricultural Company Limited which emerged in 1964 is the only one resembling the modern corporation in structure, by involving shareholders. Another ten corporation owned estates gained this status around 1959, as opposed to being a family-owned corporation. It is rather difficult to assess to what extent holdings are truly in corporate hands, as many apparently public shares

are held by heirs of the original families (e.g. Belmont, Cranstone and Lavallo, Farm, Lambert and Godwin, Stonefort, etc.). It is my impression that most corporate holdings are still family based.

Nevertheless, a significant change has occurred in the estates sector in recent years, for over thirty of the modern estates are now tightly integrated (both horizontally and vertically) through the two Agency companies under the control of the leading families. I will now discuss the role of the Agency companies, but will first list the principal means by which they dominate the estates:-

- (a) through kinship ties
- (b) through direct ownership of some estates
- (c) through credit and financing
- (d) through specialized services upon which estates depend, viz.:
 - (i) management services by company-appointed attorneys and managers
 - (ii) shipping and marketing
 - (iii) commercial services such as the supply of machine parts, fertilisers

The two companies concerned, J. W. Thurston and S. L. Horsford, are the largest commercial establishments in St. Kitts, controlling supermarkets, lumber yards, real estate, shipping, hardware, and agencies for machinery and appliances. In fact, except in the area of banking, these two companies control the island's entire economic activity. They manage the sugar cane estates through their appointed attorneys, some of whom do the managing directly, while others work with the estate managers or resident executives who are the main ones responsible for the day-to-day operation of the estates. Whether or not the Agency companies act as financial holding companies varies. Figure 5 shows the relationship between individual estates, Agency companies and attorneys. Table 5.6 summarizes the

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL ESTATES, AGENCY COMPANIES AND ATTORNEYS

Figure 7

Figure 2

GROUPS

Thurstons

Agency with financial interest
(including Thurston directors'
financial interest)

Agency without financial interest

Attorneys - C. E. D. Walwyn

N. Maynard

A. Pencheon

S. A. Davis

Horsfords

Agency with financial interest

Agency without financial interest

Attorneys - D. S. Blake

C. L. Blake

A. C. Evelyn

F. E. Bynoe

Independent

Government

ESTATES

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Note:- 1. 'W' represents the Wade Plantations and Wade family holdings
2. 'M' represents the Marshall Plantations
3. 'B' represents the Blake Plantations
4. Mr. F. E. Byrnes retires during 1968 and Conaree, of which he is owner, will probably fall into the Independent Group

main points:

Table 5.6

Estates under Agency Company Control & Management

	Direct Financial Interest %	Agency Functions only %	Total %
Thurston Co.	29.40	25.80	55.20
Horsford Co.	9.50	25.60	35.10
	38.90	51.40	90.30
Independent owners	7.40		7.40
Government	2.30		2.30
TOTAL	48.60	51.40	100.00

(Source: Bookers' Survey, 1968:11)

The J. W. Thurston Company is in the hands of the Boon family; G. P. Boon is married to J. W. Thurston's daughter, but is now officially retired, leaving his son to manage the Thurston Company, (see Table 5.7). Thurstons' manages and controls seventeen estates, which in 1968 covered over 6,182 acres of cane cultivated land and over 177,978 tons of cane; this represents over 55% of the island's cane land. Out of these seventeen estates, the company controls eight (over 3,421 acres) on a financial holding basis, mainly through Boon family ownership, and these eight are managed by Chris Walwyn who is attorney and manager to them all (Chris Walwyn is brother to Colonel Walwyn who heads the Cappesterre Agricultural Estate Limited, the largest single estate in the island, and who is married to G. P. Boon's sister). The remaining nine estates (2,761 acres) are divided into two categories. Four of them (1,443 acres) are in the hands of distant relatives through marriage, and five (1,318 acres of poor cane land with the exception of the Mansion Estate) were controlled

TABLE 5.7

ESTATES UNDER G. P. BOON'S CONTROL AND INFLUENCE

Estate	Acres of Cane Cultivated in 1968	Total Tonnage Harvested	Average yield per acre
<hr/>			
Belmont	480	17,789	37.07
Bourkes	381	6,889	18.08
Brighton	404	12,331	30.53
Brothersons	432	12,242	28.34
Buckleys	455	10,885	23.75
Cappesterre	800	26,665	33.33
Lodge & Upper Bourryeau	357	12,706	35.59
Mt. Pleasant	154	4,364	28.34
Ottleys	127	4,140	32.60
Stapleton	370	9,722	26.28
West Farm & Camp	520	11,816	22.72
Wingfield	184	8,500	19.93
 TOTAL	 4,864	 138,049	

(Source: Bookers' Survey, 1968)

by the heirs of the Wade family until they were sold to the U. K. Holding Company in 1969.

Table 5.8

Estates under Wade Family Control and Influence

<u>Estate</u>	<u>Acres cane cultivated in 1968</u>	<u>Total tonnage harvested</u>	<u>Average yield per acre</u>
Canada & Upper Canada	116	1,924	16.57
College & Douglas	369	6,570	17.81
Cunyngham	212	4,557	21.50
Hermitage & Whites	309	7,458	24.14
Mansion	312	11,420	36.60
Total	1,318	39,929	

(Source: Bookers' Survey, 1968)

The S. L. Horsford Company was established by the Marshall family and its heirs. Mr. Marshall Sr. had no sons of his own but he had five daughters who provided him with sons-in-law. For example, one daughter is married to D. Sidney Blake. The Kelsick brothers are also involved in the Horsford Company, only in a management capacity as far as St. Kitts is concerned, although the Kelsick family seem to have financial interests in Horsford's in both Antigua and Anguilla. Horsford's controls and manages a total of eleven estates covering 4,775 acres of cane cultivated land in 1968, about 40% of the island's total. The company's involvement in them takes three forms. First, the Blake family's management and control of estates through marriage to heirs of the Marshall family; this covers four estates (formerly known as the Marshall Plantations), a total of 1,617 acres of cane land. The Blake family manages these estates in the capacity of attorneys, and Horsford's itself (controlled by the Marshalls) has financial interests in them. Secondly, two estates are controlled

directly by the Blake family, i.e. without Horsford's financial involvement. They cover 1,072 acres of cane land and were bought by the Blake family itself, independently of marriage ties.

Table 5.9

Estates under Marshall & Blake Control
and influence

	<u>Acres cane cultivated in 1968</u>	<u>Total tonnage harvested</u>	<u>Average yield per acre</u>
Caines	670	19,256	28.74
Cranston & Lavallee	647	17,379	26.86
Farm	264	7,211	27.50
Lamberts & Godwin	396	9,930	25.08
Stonefort	310	6,159	19.87
Willets	502	15,067	30.01
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
Total	2,789	75,002	

(Source: Bookers' Survey, 1968)

The actual management of all these six estates is handled by the Blakes themselves, again through their attorney capacity. Thirdly, there are five estates where the Horsford Company confines itself strictly to management, with no financial interests at all. Of these, two (the Molyneux Estates) are owned by a Mrs. James who lives in the United Kingdom, two (Pond and Needsmust Estates) by the Farara heirs, and one (the Brighton Estate) by a Mr. Yearwood.

It can therefore be seen that two families, under G. P. Boon and S. Blake, control not only the two Agency companies but also almost the entire estates sector of the St. Kitts sugar industry (see Table 5.10). This control has been achieved mainly through marriage and family connections with regard to both ownership and management; even Agency-appointed

Table 5.10

St. Kitts Cane Supplying Estates
(1968)

<u>Estate</u>	<u>Cane Cultiv. Acres</u>	<u>Agency Company Mgmt.</u>	<u>Agency Direct Fin. Control</u>	<u>Agency apptd. Attorney</u>	<u>Indep. Mgmt.</u>
Belmont	480	Thurston	no	Walwyn	no
Bourkes	381	Thurston	yes	Walwyn	no
Bourryeau	132	Thurston	no	Walwyn	no
Brighton	404	Horsford	no	Evelyn	no
Brotherson	432	Thurston	no	S. Davis	no
Buckleys	455	Thurston	yes	Walwyn	no
Caines	670	Horsford	no	D.A. Blake	no
Canada	116	Thurston	no	Stott	no
Cappesterre	800	Thurston	yes	Walwyn	no
Con Phipps	332	-	-	-	yes
Granstons & La Vallee	647	Horsford	yes	D.S. Blake	no
Cunyngham	212	Thurston	no	Stott	no
College & Douglas	369	Thurston	no	Stott	no
Farm	264	Horsford	yes	D.S. Blake	no
Fountain	90	Thurston			no
Greenhill	160	-	-	-	yes
Hermitage & Whites	309	Thurston	no	Stott	no
Lambers & Godwin	396	Horsford	yes	C.L. Blake	no
Frankland	122	Horsford	no		no
Lavington & Lynches	286	-	-	-	yes
Lodge	357	Thurston	yes	Walwyn	no
Mansion	312	Thurston	no	Stott	no
Milliken	144	Thurston	no		no
Molyneux	403	Horsford	no	Owen	no
Mount Pleasant	154	Thurston	yes	Walwyn	no
New Guinea & Chalk Farm	151	-	-	-	yes
Ottleys	127	Thurston	no	Walwyn	no
Pond & Needsmost	696	Horsford	no	Evelyn	no
Shadwell	186	Thurston	no	Walwyn	no
Sir Gillies	180	Horsford	no	Evelyn	no
Stapleton	370	Thurston	yes	S. Davis	no
Stonefort	310	Horsford	yes	C.L. Blake	no
West Farm & Camp	520	Thurston	yes	Pencheon	no
Willetts	502	Horsford	no	C.L. Blake	no
Wingfield	284	Thurston	yes	S. Davis	no

(Source: Bookers' Survey, 1968)

attorneys (especially the important ones) achieved their powerful status through marriage. The ascendancy of these two families as "sugarcrats" (especially in the Boons' case) stems from the 1912 establishment of the factory; this can be seen in the changes of ownership which occurred between 1920 and 1968 (see Table 5.11). The Marshalls and the Blakes were already well-established estate owners by this time, but the Boons were not, except for Wigley who later married G. P. Boon's daughter, and Colonel Walwyn who married his sister. The Wigley family was one of the first estate owners, but have now sold all their estates, although still controlling extensive areas of land, especially in the South-East; most of the family have migrated to Britain. The rise of both families is also directly connected with a decline in estate numbers. In 1920 there were sixty-six estates (Burton, 1921), but by 1953 there were only sixty-one. (Listings of estate sizes include total landholdings, but it is very difficult to get an accurate picture of these due both to changing estate boundaries and to the fact that for tax purposes owners tend to reveal only land holdings under sugar cane cultivation rather than the true totals.) The most important ownership change at that time was the fact that the Frigate Bay and Salt Pond estates went out of cane cultivation altogether due to poor soil conditions; another four estates were merged with others. Between 1954 and 1959, seven more estates were merged, giving a total of fifty-four estates on the island, while between 1960 and 1968 twelve more estates underwent mergers, bringing the total to forty-two. The emergence of the Cappesterre Agricultural Company Limited is most important; this unit is composed of the Estridge, Hope, Belle Vale and Stonecastle estates. The present cultivated cane land distribution among estates still reflects the family nature of holdings.

Table 5.11

St. Kitts Estate Ownership in 1920

<u>Estate</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Parish</u>	<u>How Held</u>
Buckleys	914	E.H.B.Mathews-Lanow	St. George	D
Shadwell	330	A. Bromley	"	R
Pond	897	Estate J. Farara	"	D
Frigate Bay	500	M.B.Wigley	"	D
Salt Pond	2314	Estate. H.R.Briscoe	"	D
College & Douglas	674	A.B.Wade	St. Peter	D
Stapleton	716	Co.R.S.Cotton	"	D
Milliken	397	J.C.Hapier	"	R
Fountain	172	A. Smith	"	R
Bayfords'	160	B.W.Brownbill	"	D
Canada	881	A.B.Wade	"	D
Conaree	445	G.A.S.Slack	"	D
Needsmust & Great Head	1029	Estate J. Farara	"	R
Greenhill	400	J. Fletcher	Ste. Mary's	R
White	204	A.B.Wade	"	D
Cunyingham's	435	Estate E.S.Delisle	"	R
Hermitage & Spooner	561	A.B.Wade	"	D
Brighton	627	Estate J.D.Adamson & G.H.Oatwood & J.R. Yearwood	"	D
Ottleys'	297	C.A.Smith & others	"	R
Lodge	557	P. M. Todd	"	R
Estridge	902	H.W.Estridge & others	"	D
Hope	485	J.R.Yearwood	"	R
Mansion	809	C.P.Wade	"	R
Mills	227	Trustee G.F.M.Montgomerie	"	D
Farm	595	Sir Patrick Blake	"	D
Vantelle & Chalk Farm	610	W.Berridge & F.A.Burt	St. Thomas	R
Con Phipps	360	A.W.Elliott & others	"	R
Walk	291	M.A.Marshall	"	R
Godwin	512	G.A.S.Slack	"	D
Lamberts	538	B. Marshall	"	R

Table 5.11 (cont.)

<u>Estate</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Parish</u>	<u>How Held</u>
Wingfield	2372	W.Berridge & others	St. Thomas	R
Hutchinsons	394	E. Wattley	"	R
Ottleys' & Stonefort	726	B. Marshall	Trinity	R
Theroulds	219	C. H. Malone	"	R
Garveys	51	A.S.Davis	"	R
West Farm	870	A.M.Reid & others	"	R
Mt.Pleasant	166	H.Lacy-Hulbert	"	D
Camp	470	A.M.Reid & others	"	R
Lower Bourryeau	181	Heirs S.Shelford	"	R
Molyneux	993	Estate G.F.M.Montgomerie	"	R
Upper Bourryeau	189	A.D.Adamson	"	R
Stonecastel	308	A. Bromley	St. John	R
Belle Vue	418	J.R.Yearwood	"	D
Harris	240	G. McArthur	"	D
Saddlers	346	B.S.Davis	"	D
Lavingtons	289	A.B.Wade	"	D
Lynches	259	J.T.Manchester	"	R
Pogsons	150	Estate D.S.Blake	"	R
Davsons	341	Estate D.S.Blake	"	R
Caines	578	Estate D.S.Blake	"	R
Profits	349	Agnes Yearwood	"	R
Mt. Pleasant	266	C.L.Walwyn	St. Paul	R
Bellmont	844	B.S.Davis	"	R
Willets	512	Estate D.S.Blake	"	R
Brothersons	662	Every	"	R
Fahies'	326	Estate J.Farara	"	D
Cranstons	699	F. A. Burt	Ste.Ann	R
Sir Gillies	236	Estate J.Farara	"	D
LaVallee	142	F. A. Burt	"	R
Bourkes	733	W.Berridge & F.A.Burt	"	R
Pump	72	F. A. Burt	"	R

R = held by the Title of Registration

D = held by Deed

(Source: Watkins, 1924)

I will examine the dominant role of the Agency companies further in the following description of estate organization.

C. Estate organization

(1) Management level. We have seen that absentee owners' control of St. Kitts estates is not significant in so far as cane cultivated land is concerned. I have also indicated that the overwhelming majority of owners (90%) entrust the management of their estates to the attorneys appointed on their behalf by the two Agency companies. These attorneys generally work with the resident executives who are responsible for the day-to-day operations of estates, with the help of overseers, watchmen, and other people in supervisory positions. It is therefore not uncommon to find that the same Agency appointed management personnel are employed on several estates.

Several attorneys are members of the Agency companies' Boards of Directors. Chris Walwyn and D. Sidney Blake are two examples, and they are also leading members of the St. Kitts Sugar Association which represents the estates, the factory, and the sugar merchants. The Agency companies handle all sugar exports for the factory. Horsfords is also responsible for the domestic distribution of sugar for W. Kelsick, who is both the Managing Director of Horsfords and President of the St. Kitts Sugar Association. Chris Walwyn and D. Sidney Blake are owners as well as attorneys and managers. Chris Walwyn inherited the Lodge estate through his marriage to the daughter of B. Davis, who was the first Manager of the factory. D. Sidney Blake and C. L. Blake are sons of P. Blake, and the former was married to a daughter of Horsford's founder (Marshall). A third attorney, S. Davis, is the owner of the Brotherson estate as well as the attorney and Manager for the Wingfield estate; he is B. Davis's

brother, and an uncle of Chris Walwyn's wife. The other attorneys are all Agency company appointed.

There is no clear-cut duty distinction between attorneys and managers. This is due to the fact that most attorneys also act as managers. The estates' legal and financial matters are in the hands of the Agency companies' lawyers and accountants. In the case of the Molyneux estates, Horsfords' handles legal matters and all the accounting, while Barclays' Bank handles important financial decisions in consultation with W. Kelsick, his brother F. Kelsick (a lawyer who also represents the Sugar Association in legal matters) and a Mr. Owens who is the owner-appointed attorney and Manager of the estate. Some attorneys, especially those handling several estates, work mostly from their own homes but visit estates regularly, perhaps daily. Their work consists of executive management over the production of sugar cane, making and issuing daily purchases of supplies (usually through the Agency companies), keeping records to be presented weekly to the Agency companies, and making up the payrolls on the basis of workers' records presented by overseers. They also keep records of harvests, noting the different varieties of cane, in order to plan the coming year's output of cane; this information is needed by the factory Manager for planning operations in that sector of the industry, and for allocating daily cane delivery quotas to each estate.

Attorneys and managers often have no legal or financial training, nor do they have any education in technical management other than what they learn through experience; most of them are qualified for their positions merely by their family connections. Most have had some years of secondary education in Barbados or the United Kingdom, and a few have attended universities in Britain.

Resident owners, attorneys and managers are all Kittitian whites, and tend to belong to families which are closely-knit in terms of their outlook and social relationships. As a group they present a conservative outlook, being mainly concerned to preserve the status quo. They live in big, luxurious mansions with large household staffs, at some distance from the black working population; they entertain exclusively within their own class. The St. Kitts Tennis Club is open only to white estate owners, bankers, lawyers and factory supervisory personnel.

(2) Overseer level. The overseers and watchmen or yard men are on the next level of the hierarchy. All estates have at least one of each, and they are usually old and loyal workers. (The Molyneux estate is the only one that still retains two overseers, as was the general practice before the late-1959 changes.) The senior overseer is responsible for supervising the harvesting phase of the work, and for record-keeping; this includes the supervision of cane cutting and the transportation of cut cane to the factory rail sidings. He is also responsible for checking the factory tonnage receipts against each worker's share. Each cutter usually turns out about 3 tons; this is hauled by a tractor with two carts, each carrying about 1.5 tons; one tractor's load (3 tons) fills one rail boxcar. With the help of the tractor driver and the factory rail siding men, the overseer records each worker's output against the boxcar number. When the boxcar reaches the factory, the cane is weighed automatically and these records are brought to the estate every morning so that the overseer can inform the cutters of the previous day's exact output. The overseer is usually in charge of paying wages to workers in the yard of the estate, on a weekly basis. (When there is a junior overseer, he supervises the cultivation side of estate operations. This in fact invol-

ves the supervision of the remaining work on the estate, including record keeping of workers' performance.)

The majority of overseers have neither training nor any education appropriate to their jobs. Before the last war this job was done exclusively by Kittitian whites, but due to the wartime manpower shortage many blacks were elevated to overseer positions and have remained there ever since. Higher positions in the estates hierarchy are not open to black overseers. Their pay is low, averaging about \$200 or \$300 per month, which contrasts with managers' earnings of up to \$800 plus home and living allowance. Stimulated by both pay and other occupational grievances in 1968, they formed their own union for bargaining purposes but have not made much progress.

(3) Workers' level. The estates employ grooms, laundry women, maids, other servants and handymen. The people in this category all receive fixed weekly wages and work all year round; the men receive around \$20 or \$30 per week, and the women receive a maximum of \$15 per week. The next category consists of those workers who are paid at piecemeal rates; it includes cane cutters, tractor drivers and the operators of Broussard loaders. Their work is seasonal, confined to the harvesting phase of estate operations. Next there are farmers, small gang workers and planters who are paid on a daily basis. All workers in this category are engaged in planting and weeding, and most of the women belong in this category. I will describe the activities of people at the worker level of the hierarchy in the next section (d).

D. Operation of the estates

(1) Scale of operations. The areas under cane cultivation in 1968 were as follows:-

Table 5.12
Distribution of Estate Size

<u>Acres</u>	<u>No. of estates</u>
Less than 100	2
101 to 199	10
200 to 299	3
300 to 399	9
400 to 499	6
500 to 599	2
600 to 699	2
700 to 799	0
800 to 899	1
Over 900	1
Total	36

(Source: St.Kitts Sugar Factory, 1953-68)

The twelve estates in the first two categories are run mostly by individual operators and do not produce a significant amount of cane. In 1968 they cultivated a total of 1,596 acres and reaped 37,733 tons of cane (13% of the island's total). Their productivity is below that of the island average, namely, 22.78 tons per acre as compared to 26.49 tons per acre in 1968. Several of the estates in this category were up for sale at the time of fieldwork.

Table 5.13
1968 Productivity of Small Estates

<u>Estate</u>	<u>Cane Cultivation acreage</u>	<u>Tons of cane delivered</u>	<u>Tons per acre reaped</u>
Bourryeau	139	4,217	31.95
Canada	116	1,924	16.57
Fountain	90	2,369	26.32
Frankland	122	2,187	17.93
Garveys	34	305	8.97
Greenhill	160	2,782	17.40
Milliken	144	3,629	25.20
Mount Pleasant	154	4,364	28.34
New Guinea)	151	2,635	17.45
Chalk Farm)			
Ottleys	127	4,140	32.60
Shadwell	186	3,762	20.23
Sir Gillies	180	5,419	30.11

(Source: St.Kitts Sugar Factory, 1963-68)

The twelve estates in the next two size categories held about 32% of private cultivated land in 1968 (3,786 acres) and produced 31% of the total cane (97,450 tons). Their average yield was about 26 tons per acre, which is the same as the average for the island as a whole. As is the case with the estates of the last category, the more productive of these estates are controlled by the Agency companies.

Table 5.14

1968 Productivity of Medium Estates

<u>Estate</u>	<u>Cane cultivation acreage</u>	<u>Tons of cane delivered</u>	<u>Tons per acre reaped</u>
Bourkes	381	6,889	18.08
College & Douglas	369	6,570	17.81
Con Phipps	332	7,834	23.60
Cunyngham	212	4,557	21.50
Farm	264	7,211	27.50
Hermitage & White	309	7,458	24.14
Lavington & Lynches	286	8,424	29.45
Lodge & U. Bourryeau	357	12,706	35.59
Mansion	312	11,420	36.60
Stapleton	370	9,722	26.28
Stonefort	310	6,159	19.87
Wingfield	284	8,500	29.93

(Source: St.Kitts Sugar Factory, 1963-68)

The remaining twelve estates held 54% of the cultivated cane land and produced 57% of the cane in 1968 (6,404 acres and 178,032 tons respectively). Nine of these estates are owned and controlled by the Boon and Blake families; one can see that these larger estates produce the bulk of St. Kitts' sugar cane (see Table 5.15 for details).

In recent years there has been a rapid trend towards the amalgamation of estates, which has been of great benefit to the families involved in the Agency companies, especially to the Boons and the Blakes. The amalgamation of the estates into larger scale operations resulted in greater

economies of production. The smaller estates are not usually able to mechanize harvesting, hence their costs of production are higher.

Table 5.15

1968 Productivity of Larger Estates

<u>Estate</u>	<u>Cane cultivation acreage</u>	<u>Tons of cane delivered</u>	<u>Tons per acre reaped</u>
Belmont	480	17,789	37.07
Brighton	404	12,331	30.53
Brothersons	432	12,242	28.34
Buckleys	455	10,885	23.75
Caines	670	19,256	28.74
Cranston & LaValle	647	17,376	26.86
Cappesterre	800	26,665	33.33
Lamberts & Godwin	396	9,930	25.08
Molyneux	402	14,473	36.00
West Farm & Camp	520	11,816	22.72
Willets	502	15,067	30.01
Pond & Needsmost	696	10,199	14.65

(Source: St.Kitts Sugar Factory, 1963-68)

(2) Planting and weeding. The operation of a sugar cane estate involves an annual cycle of work: the planting, weeding and harvesting. This subsection will cover the first two operations.

The planting of sugar cane has not changed significantly over the past one hundred years (Beachy, 1957:90-91) except to the extent that the field is cleared by tractors instead of manually. Clearing involves pulling out cane roots or other root crop stems (which are often sweet potatoes grown for a year before planting to restore soil fungus and organic matter in preparation for the sugar cane). The cleared field is forked and banked by workers and the hoe is used to make holes into which fresh cut cane stems are planted about 3 ft. apart, depending on the variety (of which there are over twenty in St. Kitts). Cane has shallow roots and is therefore vulnerable to high winds and extensive wetting. It

tends to grow toward the ground rather than straight up, hence the need for spacing. The West Indies Sugar Association in Barbados experiments with different varieties of cane in cooperation with the St. Kitts Sugar Association Research Department. Most Estates cultivate a half dozen varieties at one time, but usually two or three varieties constitute the majority.

The cane is planted during the "dull" season. Harvesting normally ends by the first week of August and workers are given two weeks' holiday during which all estate activities come to a halt. They resume in early September, but at a slower pace. Being the dull season, during which workers are employed for only two or three days a week at a daily wage, it is also the time for such jobs as fixing damaged roads, repairing buildings and the lighter machines. Since August is the worst month for weed growth in St. Kitts (especially for Guinea grass), the dull season is also the time for weeding. The planting itself usually continues through to October; normally about 10% or 15% of the total cultivated field consists of freshly planted cane each year, and the rest grows from previously cut cane (or ratoons) since sugar cane is perennial. For this reason the majority of estates prepare each portion of a field for planting cane at an approximate interval of ten to twelve years, according to the variety of cane and its sucrose content. The latter becomes lower as cane ratoon years are increased. On the higher land (around 800 to 1,000 ft.) where the soil is rich and the rainfall greater, as many as fourteen or fifteen ratoons will be grown before fresh cane is planted, but on land nearer the ocean (500 to 700 ft.) planting is done at shorter intervals.

Depending on the weather and the growth of the planted cane, ferti-

lizers are applied around the fresh cane after several weeks and periodically from that time onwards. Small gangs of women apply the fertilizer and spend much of their time pulling weeds and applying pesticides too.

Bookers' Agricultural Survey (1968) recommends that wetter areas should avoid fall planting due to the heavier July and August rainfalls, while drier estates should avoid planting before July as the spring drought usually hurts the cane. However, my study revealed that for the majority of estates, regardless of whether in wet or dry areas, it is normal practice to plant the cane soon after the start of the dull season, that is, around September. Many estates planted their cane as late as October or November in the past few years because of the late harvest, and their managers claimed that this did not hurt the cane's growth at all. They did note, however, that much of the precious rain was wasted during harvest time instead of being able to aid the growth of new stalk from ratoons; cane that was ready to cut often received large amounts of rain prior to cutting and would shoot up rapidly, using up the sucrose content and leaving less for making sugar.

In November and December cane has to be "cleaned" by trimmers of its arrow and flower. Cane arrow has long narrow top stems with white tassels which hamper cane cutters by stinging them if not trimmed. The greatest drawback of planting late is probably the consequent difficulty of reaping fresh cane the following year. For example, one estate planted cane in November, but due to the reaping of another crop which extended into September they were unable to reap the more recent crop on time, delaying another year. This practice does not hurt the cane itself, but the estates miss a year of cane yield.

The most serious planting and weeding problem on St. Kitts estates,

however, is the labour shortage. The following table indicates how serious this problem is:

Table 5.16

Employment Shortfall on 39 Estates (1969)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Required</u>	<u>Employed</u>
Planters	50	37
Hoeing gang	146	98
Small gang	443	400
Farmers	917	592
Day workers	339	273
Trimmers	37	30
Total	1,932	1,430

Because of this labour shortage, people in ostensibly different job categories in fact do similar work.

(3) Harvesting. The sugar cane harvest is the most complex and busy part of the estate operation's yearly cycle. It usually begins in mid-January and ends in July, a relatively dry and cool period which is ideal not only for cutting operations but also for obtaining the highest sucrose content.

Four separate organizations coordinate their activities in the complex harvesting process: The St. Kitts Sugar Association, the St. Kitts-Nevis Trades and Labour Union, the St. Kitts Sugar Factory, and the estates. Just prior to the harvesting period, the Sugar Association negotiates with the Union for the coming year's wages and working conditions, for both estate and factory workers. The actual timing of harvest is fixed by the Sugar Association, but their decision is influenced by several factors. One important one is the negotiation of wage settlements which may easily delay harvesting. For example, when the 1969 crop negotiations reached a deadlock and the Government intervened by legislating a wage settlement, the harvest did not begin until March. The 1970 crop was consequently

late. In fact, it was delayed even further, for a factory strike lasting almost two months took place. Other factors influencing the harvest's timing include the factory's operation plan (with allocations of daily quotas to each estate) and an estimation of the crop itself.

There is usually a five- or six-month harvest season from February to mid-July, or from mid-January to early August. However, this pattern is often changed by several factors. The factory Manager plans for the optimal operation of the factory, and often pressures the estates to adjust supplies accordingly. In 1965, for example, over 20,000 tons of cane were left in the field when the season closed. There were in fact only twenty-two weeks in the harvest season that year, one of the shortest in recent experience. The following year, the Union understandably made an issue of this arbitrary power of the factory Manager, and all concerned made a conditional agreement that the season would not end until a minimum of 35,000 tons of sugar had been produced. This tonnage in fact represents the minimum production required for estate workers to receive a bonus. An example of what this new requirement led to can be found in the 1969 harvest, which had to continue until the last week of September in order to reach the 35,000 ton goal. The matching of harvest dates to the most economical weather conditions had therefore been seriously compromised. Altogether left out of consideration is the shortage of efficient cane cutters, based on the inability of the estates to recruit young workers (no doubt due at least partly to the very low wages offered). Until these issues are settled, harvesting conditions are likely to continue deteriorating to the discomfort of all concerned.

Harvesting work starts early in the morning and often continues until after dark, involving all hands. In the past St. Kitts cane was cut

entirely by hand, usually by men in gangs of ten with a head cutter setting the pace, and with a complement of eight handlers and six packers. With the introduction of Broussard loaders in the late 1950's (being one result of the factory's expansion program), handlers and packers were eliminated in most estates of over 200 acres. At present, no estates have gangs of larger than four cutters, while most of the cutters actually work alone.

Such operational changes as these resulted from the implementation of technological changes, especially the introduction of tractors in the late 1940's and the Broussard mechanical loaders in 1958. Using carts drawn by tractors rather than animals meant that a smaller number of workers could transport the cut cane; nor did the estates have to maintain any longer the large numbers of animals they had previously, nor did they need workers to feed and care for them. At the present time all St. Kitts estates rely upon tractors rather than animals for transporting cut cane. The introduction of mechanical loaders has also affected the cutting phase of operations, as can be seen from the reduction in gang size described above. There is no job category of packers in St. Kitts any longer, and small groups of handlers load the cane to the waiting tractors.

The progression of technological change has therefore been as follows: Firstly transportation, then loading, and finally cutting itself. Once mechanization has been introduced into the productive process, the operation of increasing efficiency acquires a logic of its own, as each phase puts pressure to change upon each successive one. For example, the worst area for conflicts and disputes in the harvesting process has currently been between the operations of cutting and loading the cane. (In this connection, the Government imported four mechanical harvesters in

1970, although these are rented only to those estates where there is a definite shortage of cutters. They are intended to protect those cutters that are employed, but it seems likely that the machines themselves will eventually put the men out of work. But at the time of field work none of these machines had yet been brought to the island). The cutters' main complaint is that the mechanical loaders do not pick up all the cane they have cut, so that they are not credited with the full amount of work they have done, resulting in unjustly lower wages. My observations tend to bear this out; there is simply too much cut cane lying on the ground in fields where harvesting has supposedly been completed. In addition, even more of the cane they have cut is lost on the road during its transportation to the rail sidings. They also complain that when the mechanical loader breaks down it has to be repaired by mechanics from the factory, with a resulting halt in the transportation of cane to the rail for one or two days (depending on the nature of the repairs). No estate has more than one of these expensive mechanical loaders, which means that tractor drivers get no work while the loader is being repaired, and cutters sometimes do not therefore get paid for work performed until the following week.

As already mentioned, many cutters now work by themselves, and only a small number of them cut in groups of two or three men, although these groups are under increasing pressure to break up since the organizational phase of the head cutter system was abolished with the introduction of the mechanical loaders (cf. Aronoff's Broken Gangs, 1967:92). I would argue that this is only to be expected from the nature of an estate operating on the basis of each worker selling his own labour as though it were a commodity; there is little room here for cooperation such as one would

notice in family operated agriculture which is based upon cooperation. This is illustrated by the example of one elderly cutter who had in the past been a head cutter. He is cutting cane alone now, more efficiently at his 64 years than some younger cutters. When asked why he was not cutting in a gang, especially with his own son who works at the same estate, he replied "I am a good cutter and all others want to work with me, but they are not good cutters. I have to do their work too. I am too old. I ain't going to do that - too much trouble, so I cut by myself". As for his son, he said simply "Young people don't want to cut cane". Indeed, my investigations revealed that his son was not considered to be a good cutter by the management. More important, the son's weekly pay was around \$12, while the father was drawing about \$17. In short, workers are competing in estate work by selling their labour; even fathers and sons become competitors.

Before the mechanical Broussard loader was introduced, each cutter used to cut one row, but now they are each responsible for two rows, in order to give the loader room to operate and to reduce the likelihood that it will trample cane roots. Cut cane is placed in piles weighing about 70 to 100 lbs. each and left behind the cutters as they proceed along the field. Each pile must be cleared of cane leaves before the loader can pick it up and load it into tractor carts, of which there are two on most estates. However, on the smaller estates where mechanical loaders are not used, about four handlers load the tractor carts. At present twenty-one estates use mechanical loaders. These are some of the ways in which the introduction of mechanical loaders changed harvesting operations. Indeed, they led to several wild-cat strikes by cutters on the estates in the early 1960's.

Cane cutters leave their homes early, often about 6 a.m., to go to their assigned fields. Each carries a machete and a lunch box, wears long-sleeved old shirt and hat, and some wear long rubber boots. Those who cannot afford boots go barefoot, and those with donkeys ride there. Others may take cows so that they can eat the top part of the cane leaves (and one often sees cutters bringing home more leaves to food pigs and goats).

Cutters cut an average of 3 tons per day, or 15 tons in a 5½-day week. The exact time needed to cut this average depends upon the condition of the cane field and the experience and age of the cutter. Normally a cutter will only have a quick lunch around 11 a.m. and work through until 2 or 3 p.m.; some start later in the day. During my fieldwork I noted that many older cutters worked early in the morning, stopped at noon to go home to rest during the heat of the day, and resumed work in the field around 4 p.m. One estate sample shows that out of 49 cutters, 2 were under 30 years of age, 4 between 30 and 40, while the majority were over 50. Cutters who finish cutting early in the afternoon spend the rest of the day at the mountain, either cultivating root crops on their own plot of ground or taking animals up there to graze and to carry home food.

The cutting of sugar cane involves several operations. First the cutter has to clear away the vines and dried leaves deposited around the cane stalk, using the hook side of his machete. Then he cuts the cane stalk as close to the ground as he can and pulls it out, again with the machete hook. He cuts off the top portion of the stalk which is green and contains very little sugar, then removes the leaves. He often cuts the cane into two or three pieces of about 4 ft. each in length, and then throws it onto the pile he has made. A good cutter finishes one cane every 17 to 23 seconds. Both the Manager and the overseers of one estate

took me on tours of the cut cane field and pointed out poorly cut areas, complaining that poor cutters leave too much of the stems above the ground. Since the sucrose content is highly concentrated in the lower portion of the cane stems, the estate's income falls when this happens. However, cutting cane close to the ground is much harder work, as the trash and leaves have to be cleared away first, and it involves the backbreaking work of bending the cane. For this reason, cutting is an all male job, while weeding and planting is often done by women and children.

Managers assign the areas to be cut each day according to the overseers' progress reports and estimate of each field. As shown below, each field is recorded according to ratoon, acreage and estimated tonnage yielded; at the end of cutting each field, the reaped tonnage is recorded as is the date of the cut and the varieties of cane. Manager often employ the tactic of "weaving", that is, arranging for cutters to alternate between cutting a good cane field and then a poor one. They claim that the cutters would otherwise all chose to cut the good fields first and leave the poor ones until last; when the time came to cut a poor field no-one would show up. Some managers will give an extra payment of 5¢ to 10¢ per ton for cutting a poor field, especially when there is a large amount of line leaf to be cleared from around the cane.

The cutting schedule must also be coordinated with the factory Traffic Manager's assignments of the daily quotas which are based upon an estimation of the total tonnage required, of the crop on each estate, and the length of the harvest season. Factory boxcars are assigned to twelve different railway sidings around the island, and cut cane is delivered to them by the 3-ton capacity tractor carts. The sidings are located in such a way that the estates sharing them will have a maximum distance of

2 or 3 miles over which to haul cane.

In 1968 the factory's capacity to grind cane was set for 2,839 tons per day. There is one estate (Cappesterre) whose daily quota is 224 tons, and one (Caines) whose quota is 176 tons, eight with 100 to 149 tons, thirteen with 50 to 99 tons, and twenty-one estates with a quota of less than 50 tons. The Molyneux Estate (which I studied in particular) seldom met its daily quota of 130 tons, and most estates seem to have the same problem. The factory was therefore often out of cane supplies and frequently had to call off the work schedule, which normally employed about 1,000 cutters (since each averages around 3 tons per day). The Department of Labour's 1969 Survey shows that the estates required 1,052 cutters while only 925 were actually hired; it is therefore not difficult to see one reason why the daily quotas are not met. Since cutters are in such high demand, they are able to work for the better estates, while the poorer ones (especially the "dry" ones) tend to be constantly short of cutters. This, together with the fact that the majority of cutters are in an older (and less energetic) age group, helps to explain why it has been necessary to prolong the harvest season so often.

In conclusion, the introduction of mechanical loaders has changed the harvesting operations of those reduced numbers of workers remaining. Their work has been increasingly coordinated with the mechanical loaders and the factory production schedule. Under these conditions, an increasing number of workers have withdrawn from estate work, and have either emigrated from St. Kitts altogether or become increasingly dependent upon remittances from their relatives or friends abroad (see Part Three). The work performance of those who have been forced to remain has deteriorated a great deal. A significant amount of marginal hillside land has been aban-

done since the mechanical loader is difficult to operate there, thus contributing to the decline of sugar cane production. There is increasing pressure to irrigate the "dry" estate land in order to increase production, but this would require the reorganization of the several dry estates as units of production, involving considerable amounts of capital. Mechanization has also forced estates to intensify yield, not only by concentrating on the most economically productive locations, but also by the heavy use of fertilizers.

(4) Estate accounts, costs and wages. As already observed, the financial management of an estate is done by its attorney in collaboration with the Agency companies. During the harvest season, managers and attorneys usually spend Thursdays and Fridays preparing accounts and wages, and the workers are paid on Saturdays. (In the dull season, wages are paid on Fridays and their preparation is simple). The Saturday payment includes work done up to Wednesday; that night overseers prepare the records on reaping and cultivation by checking and totalling each worker's hours, work days, and the tons of cane credited to each cutter. The record is forwarded from the factory traffic department to each estate by Thursday morning, and overseers check the tonnages. When cutting is done by a gang of four cutters, tonnage is divided among them. The managers and attorneys then prepare the master pay book (known as the Bonus Book). This contains the weekly wages for each worker and the days he has worked over the entire year. At the end of August (end of the fiscal year) each worker's wages and days worked to date are totalled, allowing calculation of his holiday pay received at the end of harvesting, and his bonus payment which is received at Christmas. Since 1969 managers have also been calculating the Provident Fund; 5% of wages are withheld as a form of social security

and these amounts matched by the estates to form a total payment to the Provident Fund.

There are four categories of wages among the estate workers. The first includes watchmen, overlookers, grooms, laundry women, servants and utility men, who are all paid a fixed weekly wage and work all the year round; the first four of these earn up to \$30 per week and the others up to \$15. Then there are the seasonal workers who receive the highest pay during the crop season. In the dull season they work three days per week at a fixed rate; they otherwise earn as follows: Cane cutters are paid \$1.54 per ton of cane cut, while the loader operators and tractor drivers receive 12¢ per ton. This brings the average cane cutter's income to about \$23 a week (about \$500 or \$700 for the season), the average driver's income to about \$40 per week (about \$1,040 for the season), and the average loader's income to between \$90 and \$120 per week (or \$2,200 to \$2,600 for the season). The next category includes farmers, small gang workers and planters who are paid on a daily basis and earn from \$7 to \$11 per six-day week. White collar workers are salaried employees; managers, overseers and attorneys are considered to be estate officers. Managers receive from \$600 to \$800 per month plus a bonus which is determined by the crop size. Overseers receive \$200 to \$350 per month, and attorneys over \$1,000 per month. Staff pensions are also paid by the estates for these three categories.

The main source of income for the estates is the sale of agricultural produce, mainly sugar cane and a small amount of cotton and other food crops. No livestock is raised on the estates at present, but an incidental source of income is the renting of vehicles and other equipment. Some estates hold "B" stock in the factory and receive dividends, but this

is not usually shown on estate operation and income records. The arrangement for payment by the factory for sugar cane delivered is as follows: the estates receive \$12 per ton delivered to the factory as a first payment, this being equivalent to about 55% of the net proceeds. From the remaining 45% the factory deducts all its operating expenses, and the rest is divided into two equal amounts, half being paid to the estates as a second and final payment. Estate workers used to receive roughly 55% of the second payment as their Christmas bonus, but this was changed in 1970 because the estates' share of the proceeds had become extremely small in comparison with the growing amounts claimed by the factory for so-called depreciation. The bonus is now calculated according to total wages and days worked, and workers both on estates and in the factory receive the same percentage. After the minimum quota of 35,000 tons of sugar has been produced each worker is entitled to a 5% bonus based on his gross income.

In recent years estates received \$12.95 per ton of cane delivered, less sidings crane-operating costs of 25¢ per ton. One estate, which is better managed than some and well financed, had fixed assets of over \$433,000 at the end of 1968. This figure includes a conservative estimate of the value of the land (1,100 acres, 600 of which are cultivated), buildings, machinery and vehicles; the capital account in the bank was over \$195,000. Its total revenue for 1968 was over \$209,000 including over \$195,000 for cane sales of about 15,000 tons. Estate working expenses were over \$199,000 including \$41,000 for cane cultivation and over \$41,000 for harvesting, thus producing over \$12,000 gross profit (including over \$10,000 gross profit from sugar cane). Administrative expenses were about \$14,000, which meant that this estate had a net loss of about \$2,000 in 1968. In comparison, this estate produced over 18,000 tons of cane in

1960, resulting in sales of over \$232,000, the total revenue being over \$235,000. Estate working expenses were over \$177,000, bringing the gross profit to over \$58,000; the net profit was over \$33,000. Table 5.17 shows the finances of one estate. The figures are for taxation only, and do not therefore reflect the true picture of the estate's operations as far as net profit is concerned. However, they do indicate that this estate must produce a gross revenue of over \$200,000 in order to meet its expenses, which means that around 15,000 tons of sugar cane has to be harvested annually, or an average of 37 tons per acre for 400 acres of cultivation. The Sugar Commission Report quoted the estates' costs and profits from sugar in 1967 as follows:

Table 5.18

St. Kitts Estates Costs & Profits in 1967

(\$)

<u>Years</u>	<u>Total costs</u>	<u>Revenue per acre reaped</u>	<u>Profit</u>
1941-1947	158.64	197.02	38.38
1948-1959	326.81	420.06	93.25
1960-1963	419.29	452.42	33.13
1964	410.24	444.32	34.08

(St.Kitts Sugar Commission Report, 1967:18)

It is not clear how these figures are obtained, but they seem to include many dry area estates. The estate which I studied in particular is located in the wet area, and its cane production has been one of the three highest on the island. The annual mean average yield per acre from 1957 to 1967 was over 40 tons per acre, thus it had a much better record than the general experience reflected in the above figures.

Looking at the St. Kitts estates as a whole, the cost to the reporting estates from 1954 to 1964 in terms of dollars per acre reaped

Table 5.17

Income and Expenses of One Estate: 1960-1968 (\$)

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>
<u>REVENUE:</u>							
Acres of cane cultivated	382	414	380	380	397	433	402
Tons of cane harvested	18,665	16,795	14,657	15,388	14,526	16,068	14,473
Average yield per acre	48.86	40.65	38.57	40.50	36.59	37.11	36.00
GROSS REVENUE:	235,900	224,800	177,000	246,000	216,000	230,000	209,000
<u>EXPENSES:</u>							
Cultivation	22,000	19,000	29,000	33,000	36,000	38,000	41,000
Harvesting	64,000	66,000	42,000	45,000	42,000	37,000	42,000
Fertilizers	13,000	9,000	16,000	14,000	22,000	18,000	19,000
Salary Allowance	17,000	21,000	21,000	19,000	21,000	21,000	21,000
Upkeep and Maintenance of Equipment and Machinery	14,000	24,000	30,000	22,000	26,000	28,000	31,000
Others	47,000	47,000	41,000	46,000	46,000	46,000	45,000
TOTAL EXPENSES:	173,000	187,000	179,000	179,000	193,000	188,000	199,000
GROSS PROFIT:	60,000	38,000		69,000	23,000	42,000	10,000
Less:-							
Administrative Expenses	27,000	36,000	21,000	21,000	18,000	18,000	13,000
NET PROFIT:	33,000	7,000		48,000	7,000	24,000	
NET LOSS:			17,000				3,000

(Source: Molyneux Estate Accounts)

were as follows:

Table 5.19

Costs in \$ per acre reaped 1954-64

<u>Crop year</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Ferti- lizers</u>	<u>All other inputs</u>	<u>Total</u>
1954	183	25	87	295
1955	185	32	86	303
1956	197	37	90	324
1957	204	33	108	345
1958	223	34	110	367
1959	233	32	113	378
1960	229	30	133	392
1961	224	29	153	406
1962	220	33	171	424
1963	241	34	154	429
1964	212	37	162	411

(Source: St.Kitts Sugar Commission Report, 1967:20)

These figures confirm the fact that the total cost per acre reaped is on the whole rising. But, as noted from the example of one estate, the rise in the cost of labour has been mostly in cultivation rather than harvesting, due to mechanization. However, the figures of the above table indicate that the cost of all other inputs almost doubled in the ten-year span. As the example estate shows, there has been an increase in the cost of upkeep and maintenance of machinery and equipment, and the figures seem to indicate that other estates are much less well managed than in that example. Two categories of expenses that have gone up sharply since 1960 are, first, the cultivation of cane where the least amount of mechanization has taken place, and second, the cost of upkeep and maintenance more than doubled between 1960 and 1968. However, the total harvesting expenses for the estate in the example were \$78,000 in 1960 and \$73,000 in 1968, hence mechanization can be seen to have brought about a saving in harvesting expenses. The total working expenses for this estate were \$177,600 in 1960 and \$199,000 in 1968, an increase of \$22,000 which reflects the increase in cultivating costs noted above.

The figures in the above table also show that labour costs have risen relatively little in comparison with other costs, which reveals the inaccuracy of the frequent claim by managers and attorneys that higher wages are at the source of the problem of lower returns. The very slight increase in wages over the past few years has been more than offset by the improvement in the efficiency of the estates and the higher productivity of labour obtained by retiring some of the higher and marginal land where Broussard loaders are difficult to operate. In spite of drought years, some estates have not suffered any decline in returns at all, especially those in wetter areas. Estates in dry areas, on the other hand, were simply not able to meet their production quotas; much of the decrease shown in St. Kitts overall production figures occurred in these areas.

There appear to be great fluctuations in costs in many categories from year to year. This is partly due to changing weather conditions, but more important is the fact that there is no-one to supervise and control the estates in the expert manner one would find in many modern corporations. Neither managers and attorneys nor owners have an adequate idea of how much it costs from one year to another to run an estate, nor of how to utilize financial management techniques in the most efficient way. The financial statements for the previous year are available about the middle of any current year (from the certified accounting firms); they are based upon figures submitted by managers and attorneys to the Agency companies, who in turn adjust them before submission to accountants. The figures on estates' operating expenses which are kept by the managers and attorneys have a simple record-keeping function, for these people have no financial training to facilitate the analysis and interpretation of these costs. For example, one manager who also acts as an attorney was rather surprised

and dismayed after looking over the copy of a financial statement sent to the owner to discover that the estate had lost money the previous year, which meant that his bonus was wiped out.

Most estates keep very crude records of their expenditures; managers and attorneys generally know by looking at the crop itself whether they will make money or not, but they cannot predict how much gain or loss there will be. This is understandable when one looks at the structural relationship between the estates and the factory. The estates simply do not know what their earnings will be until the factory's operating costs and the proceeds of sugar sales are known.

The estates' accounts indicate several trends in the modern plantation system of St. Kitts. On the whole, the acreage of land under cultivation for cane is declining, this being reflected in decreasing profits and a relative increase in operating costs due mainly to the increase in maintenance costs etc. for machinery. Roughly speaking, the 1950's were a decade of expansion in the sugar industry as a whole. Cane cultivated acreage increased and the factory started remodernizing its equipment to meet the post-World War II sugar shortage on the world market. However, a labour exodus to the United Kingdom began in the latter part of the 1950's, with much larger numbers moving to the U. S. Virgin Islands in the 1960's (as part of the rapidly expanding capitalist world industrial boom), thus creating a labour shortage in St. Kitts.

This decrease in both cane cultivation acreage and the availability of labour reflects the nature of colonial and capitalist economics, with its internal and external conflicts. Internally, in spite of the expanding sugar industry and its share of profits (estates' share was over 58% from 1951 to 1955) the industry did not raise the living standards of its wor-

kers, but instead started economic expansion for its own profit, which eventually forced many Kittitians to migrate in search of better earnings. Externally, capitalist industry expansion in other parts of the world in the post-war period brought a shortage of labour to the main industrial centres, thus opening the gates of immigration to a cheaper source of labour. To offset this change, the St. Kitts sugar industry was forced to mechanize in the late 1950's and early 1960's, especially in the labour-saving areas of harvesting and transportation, thus forcing even greater numbers of workers to leave the island. Labour-saving mechanization did not therefore bring about a solution for the industry, with the exception of a brief period between 1963 and 1965. As a result, the industry is now facing a chronic labour shortage which has led to a cutting-back of the acreage under cane cultivation in the estates sector (see Table 5.20). Thus, the aims of the factory to expand to meet the post-war sugar shortage have not been realized.. The factory has the capacity to handle 50,000 tons of sugar annually, and the export quota for St. Kitts sugar has been set at 42,000 tons a year, while in contrast the industry's output during the past five years has been only about 35,000 tons a year.

E. Payment and profits

The cost of operation and the depreciation of factory equipment have taken a very large portion of the estates' earnings, which is reflected in their steadily decreasing share of earnings from net factory proceeds. Their share amounted to over 58% between 1951 and 1955, 57.5% between 1956 and 1960, and 56.5% between 1960 and 1965 (St. Kitts, 1967:20). In the last few years it has been barely over 55%. Correspondingly, the acreage under cane production has declined from over 13,000 acres in 1950 to around 11,000 acres in 1965 (again, see Table 5.20). This decline was

Table 5.20

Acreage Harvested in St. Kitts between 1940-1968

<u>Years</u>	<u>Acreage Harvested</u>	<u>Total sugar harvest (tons)</u>	<u>Average yield/acre (tons)</u>
1940-42	9,990	279,000	24.40
1943-45	8,990	235,000	26.11
1946-48	10,040	273,000	27.21
1949-51	11,360	341,000	30.02
1951-55	13,090	407,000	31.09
1953	13,168	422,091	32.09
1954	13,985	400,434	28.67
1955	13,350	391,724	29.47
1956	13,353	427,983	32.08
1957	13,194	353,474	26.86
1958	12,209	379,499	31.11
1959	13,174	408,275	31.10
1960	13,828	431,630	33.75
1961	12,311	387,477	31.83
1962	12,008	411,489	34.39
1963	11,848	346,318	29.43
1964	12,474	375,474	30.11
1965	11,248	339,627	30.28
1966	12,411	345,827	27.91
1967	12,355	327,779	26.89
1968	12,107	320,591	26.49

(Source: St. Kitts Sugar Factory, 1953-68)

accentuated by three years of drought (1965-1968). The plight of St. Kitts estates in recent years has been recognized by the Sugar Commission. It was estimated (1967) that the aggregate average annual profit of the estates between 1951 and 1955 was \$1.06 million, falling to \$0.90 million between 1956 and 1960, and undergoing a very drastic decline between 1960 and 1965 to a mere \$0.25 million. Between 1960 and 1964 one out of four estates lost money, as half of them did in 1962 alone. Losses were especially severe in the West of St. Kitts where the dry estates are located. Seven of these made losses for four or five years in a row, five did for two or three years, and seven lost money during only one year of the period concerned.

Table 5.21

Distribution of Profits on Reporting Estates

(Percentage of estates in 1960-1968)

<u>Profit per acre</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>
Over \$50	34	40	4	42	34	28	14	32	17
Under \$50	38	42	39	38	32	37	45	27	23
Losses	28	18	57	20	34	35	41	41	60
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

(Source: St.Kitts Sugar Association, 1969:7)

This plight of the estates led to the development of a rift between the factory and estate owners in 1969. The latter blamed their difficulties on the factory management and demanded a more equitable arrangement of the profits. This led to the establishment of the Review Committee for the Cane Price Formula in 1969, which recommended that the estates should receive a minimum of 61% of the net proceeds (based on 96% of the sugar, amounting to 35,000 tons), and further recommended a progressive incentive based on increasing tonnages of cane production as

follows:

Table 5.22
Incentive Scheme for Cane Production

<u>96% of Sugar production in tons</u>	<u>Estates' share of net proceeds %</u>
35,000 to 37,499	61.5
37,500 to 39,999	62.0
40,000 to 42,499	62.5
42,500 and over	63.0

(Source: St.Kitts Sugar Association, 1969)

In spite of modernization, actual sugar production has been disappointing to those involved, mainly due to the decline of sugar cultivation. Under these circumstances, the workers of both factory and estates suffered the most, while the London Company protected itself through financial mechanisms: (1) Preference share holdings provided them with guaranteed annual dividends, and (2) the policy of rapid depreciation and reserves recovered their investment.

We have noted that the Factory Company is owned jointly by the contracting estates and the London Company. Before the reorganization of the Factory Company for the purpose of expanding production, the estates received 50% of the sugar sales proceeds as the first cane payment, and after deducting the factory's operating expenses, export tax, and reserve fund, the remaining surplus was divided into two equal portions; one was paid to "A" shareholders in the form of dividends. The estate workers' Christmas bonus was based on a one-third portion of the final cane payment to the estates. Under this formula, the lower the first cane payment was, the larger was the amount of divisible surplus, so that the London Company benefited at the expense of the contracting estates. It was therefore

recommended to the Commission in 1949 that the first cane payment to the estates be increased to 55%, and that the estate workers' bonus be increased from one-third to 55% of the final payment. This recommendation came after a thirteen-week strike for higher wages by the workers of St. Kitts and Nevis. After these two changes, workers began to earn more through normal wage increases and bonus increases, and the estates received better compensation for their cane.

However, the 1959 reorganization of the Factory Company changed the situation unfavourably. In the first place, Preference shares were created and these not only received guaranteed annual dividends, but also took priority over Ordinary shares. Thus "A" shareholders (the London Company) effectively protected their investments and dividends. They received annually £40,000 in dividends and £18,000 in redemptions, these being automatically set aside as part of the expenses before the divisible surplus was calculated for the final payment to the estates. In the second place, Deferred shares were created and distributed to "B" shareholders or to contracting estates according to their tonnage of sugar deliveries (one share per 10 tons), and the annual dividends were fixed at ¼%. Thirdly, the annual dividends from Ordinary shares were fixed at 5%, which resulted in the fixed combined "B" dividends for Ordinary and Deferred shares of £650 per year as the first cane payment to the estates. Furthermore, this arrangement among shareholders (or between the factory and the estates) had the result that in wet area estates where cane yield was higher a proportionately larger amount was received than was the case for estates in the dry area. The latter might own 2% of the Factory Company equity, yet would probably receive less than 2% of the shared profits since the final cane payment, the divisible surplus, is based upon the

distribution of "B" Deferred shares. This method also effectively prevented any original (1927) "B" shareholders who were no longer estate owners from receiving any divisible surplus from the net proceeds; they could only receive dividends from Ordinary shares. The net result of these changes was a drastic reduction in the divisible surplus from 45% of the net factory proceeds. In spite of an increase in the first cane payment to 55% in 1969, the final cane payment to estates declined, as did the intended "increase" in the workers' bonus to 55% of this payment - which in fact became a negative one. In other words, the rate increase amounted to no real increase.

In conclusion, under the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement and guaranteed quotas and prices, factory income increased rapidly between 1951 and 1965 as compared to 1945. In spite of the increased percentage of 54% between 1941 and 1965 for the first cane payment to the estates, total payments to estates actually declined from 57.5% to 56.6%, and this has been further reduced to barely over 55% since 1965. During this time the estate workers' bonus also declined rapidly, as did the percentage of factory expenditure of wages to workers (37.7% between 1956 and 1960, falling to 34.6% between 1961 and 1965). Therefore while the actual income of the factory increased as the result of modernization and through increased productivity of labour, the estate and factory workers actually received lower incomes due to the rapidly increasing large capital reserves (Preference dividends for British shareholders) and factory costs, especially the large so-called depreciation costs.

As far as wages are concerned, operating costs for both factory and estates have declined along with the cost of some other items (including export duty). This reflects mechanization and falling sugar produc-

tion. However, factory depreciation increased from 4.2% in 1951 - 1955 to 12.8% in 1961 - 1965. This is an increase of more than three times in a ten-year period. The Reserve for Preference Dividends Redemption also increased sharply over this period. Thus, in spite of drought, declined sugar production and declined total revenue from St. Kitts sugar production and profit, the factory took care of itself by allocating large depreciation costs and reserves in order to avoid distributing better returns to the estate owners and workers. Since 1965, depreciation charges have increased even further. In that year they were slightly over £2.50 per ton of sugar produced, but by 1968 had increased to almost £4 per ton, thus increasing the cost of sugar production from £6 per ton in 1965 to £7 per ton in 1968. This is incredible when one looks at the plight of many of the estates and all of the workers. More than 60% of the St. Kitts estates lost money in 1968 (see Table 5.21), and the question is justifiably raised as to how much of this loss may be directly attributed to the avaricious distribution of factory "costs". These hardships led to the rift between the factory and the estates in 1969. One estate owner stated that "the factory has been bleeding the estates a slow death". Several owners even claimed that all key factory personnel had been increasing their luxurious household tools and automobiles, that their holidays in Europe came out of the factory's "operating costs", and that they were going to "stand no more!"

F. Future of the estates

The Estate Management Company Limited (which I will refer to as EMCL), which was proposed in 1968 by a British firm with extensive control of Guyana's sugar production (namely Bookers' Agricultural and Technical Services Ltd.) in order to solve the present economic crisis of the St.

Kitts estates, was to be a capitalist farming management scheme based on renting cane land from the estate owners. The EMCL would not own the land, but would control it through a central management of the majority of private estates in St. Kitts (36 at present) which would be organized into seven regional units in order to increase production. The proposal was essentially two-fold. On the one hand, cane cultivated acreage was to be increased from the present 11,000 acres to 13,000 acres; at the same time irrigation was to be carried out on about 2,000 acres of dry area estates which would form a consortium to carry out irrigation investment jointly. On the other hand, more efficient use was to be made of labour. It was envisioned that these changes would ensure a minimum annual sugar production of at least 40,000 tons. This solution is typical of the tendency of all capitalist enterprises to intensify land use and reduce the employment of labourers. What is significant is that the EMCL operation proposed a parallel structure to the factory organization, with all officers except the seven area supervisors to be recruited from abroad. These Area Supervisors would be under the control of the Agricultural Director, who would be under the control of the Managing Director in his turn, along with the Directors of Transport, Labour Relations, Research and Finance. At the top of the hierarchy would be the EMCL Board of Directors.

As was the case with the factory, external control by EMCL would not be through ownership (of the land) but through financial and technical means. The necessary capital investment for EMCL would be minimal, and would include operating capital. All transport and implements would be acquired from estate owners at market value, and buildings would be rented. The allocation of profits to estate owners would not be done until

the reserves were created for capital needs and operating costs had been deducted....."any surplus funds to be passed back to the owners by reduction of EMCL charge for overhead".

It is interesting to note what the relationship between EMCL and the factory would have been. This was never made explicit by Bookers', but it is very likely that many of the EMCL stockholders and Directors would be the key shareholders of the London Company (especially Henckell Du Buisson) since there would otherwise be potential conflicts between them, and no investors would put money into that situation.

I would argue that there is no need for such an involvement as EMCL's in order to produce 40,000 tons of sugar, in the same way that there was no need before for the modernization of the factory to produce 51,000 tons of sugar. The only reason behind both these schemes is to further exploit the workers and thus improve profits. Bookers' estimated that even if the St. Kitts Government permitted their scheme, further mechanization could be carried out on only 5,000 more acres out of the remaining 13,000 acres of land, due to the island's topography. The majority of extra cane would therefore still have to be cut by workers, which means that any extra profits would have to come from further regimentation and exploitation of the workers, or finding more workers, since further technological improvements are limited. The importation of workers from neighbouring islands is prohibited by the Government on the grounds that there is actually no shortage in the availability of workers. The possibility of recruiting extra workers within the island itself is not likely under present working conditions. In short, I would argue that the EMCL proposal recommended by Bookers' would fulfil two purposes:

(a) provide an additional outlet for investment and hence be a

source of profits for British investors, and expand their control over estate owners and workers;

(b) ensure 40,000 tons of sugar annually. Thus British capitalists would take full advantage of the modernization of the factory and the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement quotas and prices to maximize profits.

The future of the estates sector in St. Kitts would involve no improvements for either the majority of estate owners or for estate workers if such a scheme as this were followed.

G. Summary

I have described how under the modern plantation system the estates sector has become separated from the factory in terms of ownership. The majority of estate owners are now local residents, and their operations are coordinated under the Agency system which is controlled by two local merchant companies, which are in turn dominated by a few St. Kitts families. The Agency system is structured to coordinate the operations of estates with factory requirements. At the same time, the estates sector has become characterized by a concentration of ownership and management control, and by very limited change in the area of technological adaptations. I have also shown how the social relations of production (among owners, managers and workers) are still characterized by patterns which have been inherited from the old plantation system. Nevertheless, there has been a significant change in the overall operation of the estates sector. Estates are increasingly forced to reduce areas under cultivation to land which is accessible to those machines which have been introduced. At the same time the gang system of cane harvesting has been broken down, while individual workers are now in a situation where they have to cut increasing amounts of cane to satisfy the factory's growing

demands. Pressures on the cane cutters have therefore increased considerably, partly due to a shortage of cutters. However, I have argued that the breakdown of the gang system was inevitable since the introduction of mechanical loaders required a change in harvesting organization. But the increased demands on workers have not been paralleled with adequate compensation, consequently many workers are forced either to withdraw permanently from estate labour and seek alternative means of income (particularly through emigration) or their work performance becomes erratic. In the face of the consequently reduced cane production, the factory blamed the estates sector for not fulfilling the quota needed to operate efficiently (i.e. to cut the costs of production as compared to rising wages) while in their turn the estate owners accused the Union and the Government of causing their difficulties. Conflicts between the estates and the factory have been intensified lately, for while most of the former have been losing money for several years the factory has lost none, because of the procedures followed for distributing payments between the two sectors of the industry. A new scheme of estate management, which is in line with modern agro-business trends of organization and operation, has been proposed to meet the crisis, but its adoption has so far been prevented by the growing suspicion between the factory and the estates sector.

PART THREE

SOCIETY AND POLITICS IN MODERN ST. KITTS

In this part of the thesis the major concern is the development of modern St. Kitts society and politics, focussing on the growth of the working class movement and the changing class structure in relation to the evolution of the modern plantation system.

In Chapter Six I will examine the development of the working class and its struggles against both the sugar industry and the Crown Colony system.

CHAPTER SIX

WORKING CLASS DEVELOPMENT IN ST. KITTS

A. Introduction

In this chapter I will describe the development of working class organization as part of a series of responses to three main groups of problems. These problems are tied in with features of the St. Kitts sugar industry itself. Problems experienced by Kittitian working people which I discuss under the heading of Crown Colony political structure are clearly related to the colonial, capitalist nature of the plantation society which has been described above. In the same way, the problems associated with the concentration of land ownership and limitations on food supplies are rooted in the island's history, in particular in the organizations of production which have characterized the St. Kitts plantation system. A more explicit link between the changing working class position and organizational and technological changes in the sugar industry will be provided in Chapter Seven.

B. Background

The development of organized working class political activity in St. Kitts was fundamentally influenced by the various factors underlying the conditions under which the vast majority of St. Kitts' inhabitants lived. These may be broadly grouped as follows:-

(1) Crown Colony political structure. The Crown Colonies of the West Indies were established by the British in 1872. The system has been aptly described by Gordon Lewis (1968) as a "negative" government as far as West Indian people were concerned. It functioned almost exclusively to meet the interests of local planters and overseas investors, and this

was most apparent at times of crisis. The series of Royal Commissions sent out by the Colonial Office in London to investigate problems amounted to no more than measures maintaining the status quo. In fact, they served to expose the bankruptcy of the whole Crown Colony system in the face of urgent economic and political problems. Any changes which did occur, either in the political sphere or in sugar industry operations, were forced either by militant action by the workers themselves, or by economic necessities; neither the local governing bodies nor the Royal Commissions had any improvements to offer. For example, the 1898 Royal Commission recommended the development of diversified land use from monocrop sugar cane cultivation, by developing independent peasant food production to supply local consumption needs (as almost all staple foods were imported). But the recommendation provided no practical means to achieve this aim, and the colonial government was able to ignore it altogether. Not until the Depression of the 1930's and the so-called St. Kitts riots in 1936 did the colonial government purchase two small parcels of land for agricultural diversification purposes, but even this program was not followed through; even today most agriculturalists cultivate sugar cane rather than food crops. There was a tendency to try and solve the colonies' economic problems through the increasing centralization of political and economic institutions, of which the 1880 Leeward Island Federation and the 1912 sugar factory establishment are examples (cf. Frucht, 1966). In so far as the oppression of the working people is concerned, these changes led to a worsening, and did not change the fundamental faults of the status quo at all.

(2) Land ownership. As noted in Chapter Three, a fundamental characteristic of the old plantation system was a cheap and abundant labour

supply based on decentralized units of production. The monopoly of land ownership which the planters enjoyed prevented workers' access to any means of subsistence other than employment by them, and thus assured themselves of the labour they desired. It meant that the Emancipation of slaves did not really free them at all, as they had no choice but to sell their labour to the planters at wages fixed by them.

The 1937/8 Royal Commission, which investigated the social-economic crisis of the West Indies resulting from the Depression, reported that the working people were held in an exploitative task work system on the estates. It stated that in St. Kitts (and in St. Vincent) "the wage level had barely advanced beyond the daily 1s. rate introduced after Emancipation", that there was widespread "gross malnutrition and chronic sickness", and that any attempt by the workers to improve their plight was crushed with the help of punitive legislation. The fact that all the land was in planters' hands had far-reaching consequences for the workers. Not only were the planters able to exploit their position as exclusive employers by holding down wages to increase their own profits, but they owned the land upon which the workers' homes stood. This had two consequences. First, housing developments and improvements were inhibited; workers' houses were thatch-roofed and had been poorly built, along gullies of unproductive areas, and were frequently destroyed by hurricanes. Secondly, the planters had the power to evict workers at will. This made it virtually impossible for a worker to demand higher wages, say for his children's education and medical needs.

(3) Food supplies. Since all the land was under planters' control, they were able to prevent crop diversification, and thus forced workers to depend upon wages, and in turn upon imported food supplies. For ins-

tance, more than three-quarters of the total food consumption during World War I were imported. A few subsistence plots were available to workers, but in the main they were dependent upon the income earned from a crop which fluctuated a great deal from year to year as a result of disasters, such as droughts and hurricanes. It seems that some of the workers, and especially their families, were undernourished most of the time.

This dependence upon imports placed the workers at the mercy of fluctuating world events. As early as 1896, during the depression of cane sugar in the world market, due to the competition from European beet sugar (and the effects of droughts and hurricanes in the 1870's), the Sir Henry Norman Commission was sent out to investigate the great suffering in the colonies. It recommended the resettlement of the labouring population on small plots of land as peasant proprietors, and the corresponding establishment of minor agricultural industries with small peasant proprietors in St. Kitts. In 1929 the Royal Commission headed by Lord Oliver made the same recommendations, and noted especially the vulnerability of mono-crop agricultures.

In the world Depression of the 1930's the sugar market collapsed and the workers suffered immensely. The two World Wars also intensified their misery, since sources of food imports were otherwise engaged, and shipping was geared to the war effort.

As will be shown subsequently, any attempt by workers to remedy their dependence upon food imports, and upon the wages needed to buy them, were systematically opposed by the planters, who wished to maintain the advantages of cheap and abundant labour that this dependence brought them.

Under these economically and politically oppressive conditions, the forces of change gradually took shape among the working class. By the

1930's they were ready to begin taking the initiative in shaping the future of St. Kitts.

C. The development of working class organization

The working class struggle in St. Kitts has been aimed mainly at improving their economic and political plight, but the specific goals have varied over time in response to a changing reality. The emergence of leaders, the particular strategies they adopted, and the development of workers' organizations, are all related to the shifting specific aims of the working people; all these aspects are closely linked to other factors operating in the island at different times.

It is helpful when examining the interconnections among all these occurrences to distinguish four broad periods of time, based principally upon different aspects of working class aims.

(1) Stage One: 1916-1937. In this initial period of their struggles working people aimed mainly at organizing themselves in order to promote their well-being in general. This was facilitated by the fact that since 1912 workers from diverse plantations had been brought into closer relationships with each other through the centralization of sugar production.

Leaders such as A. Halbert and J. Warner were inspired by what they had read or heard about the development of the British working class movement; these men were themselves workers, and self-taught readers too. Efforts to organize a Labour Union go back to the dark period of World War I, when St. Kitts was suffering from a food shortage and economic crisis. In 1916 these efforts were crushed by the passage of a law under the leadership of Governor Van Best which actually prohibited any union organization. The early labour leaders had therefore to change their tactics, and two main instruments were used.

Firstly they used their newspaper, the Union Messenger (started in 1921), to broaden the workers' horizons and to heighten their awareness as a class. The people were educated as to the need for a change in the oppressive social and economic conditions under which they lived. These came to light dramatically during the 1924 and 1928 hurricanes which destroyed the poorly-built homes that most workers lived in. The leaders advocated better housing conditions, pointing out how the monopoly of land ownership by the planters inhibited housing development and improvements. They aimed at reducing the planters' powers of eviction, so as to enable workers to struggle freely on wage issues.

Secondly, they used the existing Charity Act to permit themselves some degree of legitimate organization. Under this Act, many charity organizations were allowed to operate, such as the Heart and Hand Society which provided sickness and death benefit insurances to its members. In 1918 the St. Kitts-Nevis Universal Benevolent Society was created. The activities carried out under the auspices of this organization did much to consolidate scattered workers. For example, a major problem was the lack of medical facilities, and so the Society finally imported an ambulance in 1934. Not only did this move have a great symbolic value for St. Kitts people, but it also constituted a giant step towards the emergence of a coherent working class movement, to the extent that they realized that oppressive conditions could be changed through their own combined efforts.

During the world wide economic Depression of the 1930's when St. Kitts as well as other British colonies suffered, further efforts of the working class to protect their interests resulted in the creation in 1932 of the Workers' League, under the leadership of Thomas Manchester (a school teacher). Other West Indian leaders greatly stimulated the League's early

development. At the Dominica Conference three men in particular made a concerted effort to coordinate West Indian workers and their aspirations for self-government: Cecil Rawle of Dominica, T. J. Marryshow of Grenada, and "Captain" Arthur Cipriani of Trinidad. The issue at that Conference was the oppressive system of Government existing under the Crown Colony.

The importance of the Workers' League becomes clear if one remembers that organization among workers was illegal. In 1930 the factory workers' wages were cut at a time when they were already suffering from the effects of both drought and the Depression. Starting in 1931, the planters received large windfall profits due to preferential tariffs for British West Indian sugar. These profits were greater even than the entire amount of Government expenses on the island, yet estate and factory workers were given yet another wage cut. At this time they were working twelve hours a day and earning a meagre 6d. and 1s. per day respectively! This action culminated in the workers' walk-off from their jobs in 1932. The employers, however, were able to force their return under existing law which condemned them for "breach of contract". Incredibly, a further wage cut was imposed as a punitive measure. However, the continuing oppressive conditions under which working people lived, and the low wages paid by planters and factory, led to a strike of estate workers on January 28th, 1935, at the beginning of the harvest season. Known as the "Buckley Riot", it began with over four hundred workers marching from Buckley's Estate, being joined by workers from elsewhere. On the second day of this strike, the Riot Act was put into force, permitting the police (and Buckley's manager) to start shooting, with three men killed and eight wounded as a result. Several dozen were subsequently convicted under the Riot Act. Officials of the Workers' League were not involved in the actual strike

activities (since these were quite spontaneous), but they did help restore peace and raise money to defend the accused. (There was no compensation for injured workers' families until the Workmen's Compensation Law was passed in 1937, and this was of minimal value since it excluded four-fifths of the workers, among them all the domestic workers.)

The initial steps towards self-government by the St. Kitts people were also taken in this period. Britain was also suffering from the depression of the 1930's and she wanted economic measures to consolidate the colonies and save money. This led to the scheme for the federation of the West Indian islands, especially between the Leeward and Windward Islands. The commission known as the "Closer Union Commission" headed by Sir Wm. Ferguson, came to the West Indies in 1932. At the Dominica Conference (known as the West Indian National League in 1932) the West Indian labour leaders decided upon a strategy of total boycott of the Closer Union Commission unless it would hear West Indian cases. At the conference, agreement was reached on three points of strategy:

- (a) no taxation without representation,
- (b) no federation without self-government, and
- (c) the abolition of the Crown Colony.

The first of these was a big issue at the time, because an earlier commission (1922) had recommended further taxation in order to meet the social-economic problems of the West Indies, while the majority of the people were not represented. The Legislative Councils were controlled by planters and merchants. The Closer Union Commission recommended a limited elective system in the Crown Colonies by introducing elected unofficial members to the Legislative Council. This was a victory for the Leeward Island working class, as it opened the way to elect workers' leaders; but what was reco-

mmended was already in existence in the Windward Islands (Dominica, Grenada, and Trinidad). Thus the leaders were split between the Leeward and Windward Islands, since the latter wanted further concessions. The structure of the Legislative Council in St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla (existing since 1882) was composed of an Administrator, seven official and seven unofficial members. The officials were government department heads, and the seven unofficials were mostly planters and merchants. All were nominated by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London. The unofficial members of the Legislative Council were given an opportunity to express their views, and they voted four against and three in favour of changing the existing constitution. The Workers' League immediately petitioned the Secretary of State to the effect that this rejection by the unofficial members was contrary to the Legislative Council's earlier stand. The Colonial Office in London eventually accepted the Closer Union Commission's recommendation, mainly because of its desire to consolidate the colonies to save money, and also because the Windward Islanders already had the right to vote. For this reason, in July 1935, the change took place in the constitution and the formation occurred of the Leeward Islands' Legislative Councils along the lines of the Dominica model. St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla would have three nominated unofficial and five elected unofficial members (three from St. Kitts, one from Nevis, and one from Anguilla); they would have three official members, including the Administrator who would have only the right of casting a tie vote.

The Workers' League organized and mobilized the election, which took place on June 14th 1937, and elected a President (Thomas Manchester), a Vice-President (Edgar O. Challenger, a distant cousin of Manchester), and a Barrister-in-law who was also sympathetic to the labour cause

(Clement Malone); William Walwyn (a planter) and Pat Ryan (a merchant) were defeated. In Nevis, George Henville was elected (also a labour supporter), and in Anguilla Albert Owen (a property owners, and uncle to the present manager of the Molyneux Estate). This was a clear-cut victory for the working people in the face of many election obstacles such as property qualifications favouring planters and merchants. Under the property qualification restriction, there were only 133 qualified voters in Anguilla, 328 in Nevis, and 1,168 in St. Kitts; only 1,629 voters out of a total population of about 36,000. Besides the five elected unofficial members, the new Legislative Council included the Administrator (D. R. Stewart), the Crown Attorney (A. Ridehalgh), and the Acting Treasurer (S. E. Moir), making up the three official members. There were also three nominated unofficial members, and these were property owners: W. B. De-Grasse, G. P. Boon (both planters), and B. B. Davis (sugar factory Manager and estate owner).

To sum up, Stage One in the development of working class emancipation saw the materialization of workers' plans to organize themselves, and it seems that great advances were made in the growth of class consciousness through the use of the press and through election issues.

(2) Stage Two: 1937 - 1951. The second stage of the working class struggle spread both within and beyond the island, and its intensity was heightened. Concentration on more specific issues was predominant in this phase.

The Buckley Riot had far-reaching effects throughout the West Indies; workers exploded in protest of similarly oppressive conditions in St. Vincent (October 21st, 1935), Trinidad (June, 1937), British Guyana (June, 1937), the Bahamas (August, 1937) and Jamaica (January, 1938). Many

people were killed and wounded in these protests. In Jamaica the strike was extensive and the British brought in troops to handle it. A British Navy ship appeared in St. Kitts too, but no troops were landed. In response to the spread of strikes throughout the Crown Colonies in the West Indies, the British Parliament set up another Royal Commission (1938) under Lord Moyne. But perhaps more important, most of the workers in the West Indies received small wage increases as a result of these "mass line" tactics. Under their pressure, the Leeward Islands' Legislature passed minimum wage laws in December 1937.

However, the outbreak of World War II brought more hardships for workers in the colonies. St. Kitts again faced the major problem of rising prices of imported foods, as there was still no significant internal supply because planters refused to make the appropriate changes in cultivation. On April 1st 1940, the factory workers staged a walk-out which lasted seven weeks. They demanded a wage increase to meet the 15% rise in food prices, but the factory only offered a 10% increase which was furthermore conditional upon there being a further 20% rise in food prices. At this point one can see again how the process of centralization in the sugar industry affected workers' lives. The interests of the planters also came to be centralized through the establishment of the St. Kitts Sugar Association in 1930 (which superseded the St. Kitts Agricultural Society and included the factory Manager and other supervisory personnel). This body had the function of developing overall policies in areas of industrial and public relations, wage negotiations and so on. On the workers' side, negotiations for these wage increases were handled by the St. Kitts-Nevis Trades and Labour Union which had been officially organized the previous year, thanks to the Trade Union Act of 1936 which finally removed the prohibition

against workers' unions. The first elected President of the Union was Edgar O. Challenger, who had been the Vice-President of the Workers' League (which eventually became the St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla Labour Party). Challenger differed from later leaders in that he was not himself a labourer. The Challenger family had been very successful planters' merchants before the factory was established; their business suffered due to the rise to economic power of Marshall and Boon (see Chapter Five), and the all-embracing financial and commercial functions of the two Agency companies. Again, the far-reaching effects of centralization in sugar production can be seen, for it resulted in the need to coordinate the estates with the factory, and the consequent dominance of the Agency companies. The entry of merchants' families into the working people's political arena was largely a result of their opposition to these changes.

Relating these developments to the 1940 struggle for wage increases, it seems clear that the Sugar Association did not intend to negotiate (as their unrealistic offer shows), but instead to crush the two-month old Trades and Labour Union. According to first-hand information supplied by Mr. Challenger himself (who led this strike in his capacity of Union President) the mood of the strikers was very intense, with the clear possibility that a violent confrontation would occur. He was called to Antigua (where the Governor of the Leeward Islands resided) and given an ultimatum, whereby the Government would mobilize troops against the strikers unless they returned to work. Thus, it was clear that the Government's limited recognition of workers' rights shown in the 1936 Trade Union Act did not reduce its commitment to employers' interests.

Another example of the concentration of working class struggles upon specific issues which was characteristic of this phase in their deve-

lopment can be found in the land question. As was noted above, one of the causes of St. Kitts workers' oppressed condition was the planters' monopoly of land ownership. After the strikes of 1935 onwards, the land question became an urgent issue. The Workers' League, which had begun to "feel its muscles" by then (since it had extended its activities to cover all non-whites rather than just the working class), took up this issue at every available opportunity, but they were blocked by the estate owners who wanted to ensure that workers continued to be absolutely dependent upon them, and thus provide a continuing supply of cheap labour. However, the Public Land Acquisition Act was passed in 1940 in the Leeward Island Legislature. The Government acquired the Fahies and Saddlers' estates in 1941, and began diversifying the island's agriculture and raising food crops. In the late 1940's, the Government also bought more land in St. Kitts for a housing scheme under the Central Housing Authority; the 1952 construction of Molyneux village was one result of this scheme (see Chapter Eight).

Finally, this phase in working class politics saw the beginnings of an association between their specific aims and the general problem of political repression as experienced under colonial rule. According to Mr. Challenger, the most prominent leader at the time, he decided to return from a sojourn in Canada and the U.S.A. once he felt that systems of colonial government were on the decline, and nationalism rising in importance. The Union and the workers in the colonies became increasingly aware that the colonial government always backed the planters and merchants, and consequently the need for political representation was recognized.

To sum up, Stage Two included the emergence of viable and official working class organizations, and a growing effectiveness in the use of "mass line" tactics to obtain specific goals. The need to break colonial

rule also emerged as a goal of the working people.

(3) Stage Three: 1951 - 1967. Working class struggles at this stage became increasingly oriented toward taking over political power. The St. Kitts-Nevis Trades and Labour Union became a truer instrument of the workers in this period, for working men were put in the position of leaders, living, working and struggling side-by-side with their followers. These leaders (Robert Bradshaw and James France) were responsible directly to the workers themselves rather than through any intermediary organs, as had been the case previously. This reduced the possibility of either deliberate or inadvertent manipulation of the workers.

During this period the sugar industry was becoming increasingly mechanized through the application of new technology, which led to a sharp drop in the number of workers employed, and increasing demands being put upon them in terms of productivity. These demands were met by a better-organized body of workers than ever before. "Mass line" tactics were officially incorporated into both the political and economic areas of union activity.

Gradual success was experienced in the Union's efforts to abolish colonial rule and obtain local autonomy. The seven-week strike of 1940 had left an unmistakable impression that the workers were united (upon both management and Government). In 1943, when wage negotiations between the Union and management reached a deadlock, a Wage Board was created and government declared wage increases resulted. But the turning point in the struggle to end the Crown Colony system came during the 1948 thirteen-week strike. This was caused by the employers' attempt to avoid paying workers their usual bonus, and resulted in capitulation by the management. The strength and solidarity of the workers was the strongest ever witnessed

by either the employers or the Government. This time the Soulbury Commission was established to investigate means of instituting greater participation of the people in colonial politics. This resulted in the granting of universal suffrage in 1952; a "membership system" was then introduced. Three members of the Executive Council acted in a consultative and advisory capacity in the areas of (a) trade and production, (b) communication and works, and (c) social services. On the basis of this experience, a limited ministerial system was created in 1956, replacing the membership system.

Under the latter, extensive programs of housing, water and utilities improvements were carried out, and the education system was extended. This was progress towards internal self-government for the people. Under this system the Governor could only act according to the advice of the Cabinet (whereas before he had been able to reject the advice of the Executive Council), and so the most oppressive aspect of the Crown Colony system (namely, the unaccountable power of the Governor over the people) was eliminated. In 1956 the Leeward Islands Colony was abolished, and the West Indian Federation was established in 1958. In January 1960 the constitution of St. Kitts was amended according to the Federation scheme, and the real responsibility for the island's government shifted to the elected representatives. It included provisions for:

(a) a Chief Minister, being the person considered by the Administrator most likely to command a majority in the Legislative Council;

(b) three other Ministers (Communications and Works, Agriculture and Labour, Social Services) and a Member of the Executive Council without Portfolio, all to be appointed on the advice of the Chief Minister and automatically becoming Members of the Executive Council;

(c) the reduction of the reserve powers of the Administrator and the almost total disappearance of powers to refuse to grant assent to Bills passed by the Legislative Council (St. Kitts, Five Year Plan, 1969-73:8-9).

The West Indian Federation was based on the internal self-government of the member islands. Although the British claimed that this arrangement was regional independence, it was not this at all, but rather consisted of the long sought-after British colonial policy of pacification and containment on a regional basis, and brought lower administrative costs for the British. Commercial exchange between the islands was prohibited, and the only commercial relationship allowed to each of the islands under colonial policy was between itself and Britain. Even today, many islands compete with each other under this structure.

When Jamaica decided to pull out of the Federation in 1961, it collapsed as a territorial and political union. Jamaica and Trinidad declared their independence in 1962, Guyana and Barbados followed in 1966, and other small islands (St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, Antigua, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenada) became Associated States in 1967. The remaining smaller islands are still British colonies (Cayman Islands, Turks, Caicos Islands, Montserrat, and the British Virgin Islands). With the formation of the Associated States in 1966, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla became an independent nation as far as the management of internal affairs was concerned. After three hundred years of slavery and colonial experience, the people of St. Kitts had wrestled political power away from both the planter class and the United Kingdom. At present, however, there are still two limitations on the powers of the St. Kitts Government and its Cabinet. These are the areas of defence and foreign policy, which are still under the control of the British; this was demonstrated during the Anguilla

effort at cessation from the State, which led to the landing of British troops in 1969.

To sum up, it was in this stage that the Union reached its zenith, both in terms of progressive and responsive leadership and an increased strength of the working class, with concrete results in terms of shaking off colonial rule.

(4) Stage Four: 1968 onwards. The most important aspects of modern political activity in St. Kitts will be discussed in Chapter Seven. From the point of view of working class organization, however, it can be noted here that the relationship between leaders and followers began to change when the leaders were elected into the newly independent Government. Even though the aims of the leaders continue to be the improvement of workers' rights and welfare, the working class no longer regards their efforts with enthusiasm. Their sympathies are aptly expressed by one worker who said, "Mr. Bradshaw went to work for the Government".

The aims of the working class have shifted from constitutional matters to a focus upon complete emancipation and control over their own lives, mainly by taking over the sugar industry.

The following chapter will continue this description and analysis of working class political activities in the broader context of St. Kitts social structure.

CHAPTER SEVEN
SOCIAL CLASS AND POLITICS

A. Introduction

In this chapter, I will describe the social class structure and its changes under the plantation mode of production, and its connection with politics which in St. Kitts, when regarded as a process of integration, is closely reflected in property relations (class structures). Class structure changes in St. Kitts have always been closely related to changes in the plantation system, especially in relation to the separation of labour from the means of production, and each stage in the process of this separation was marked by changes in the political sphere.

Section B will describe the development of class structure and politics, which followed the Emancipation of slaves in St. Kitts. Section C will describe the development of class structure in connection with changes in the organization of production under the modern plantation system. Section D will cover class structure and politics in St. Kitts at present.

B. Class structure: historical development

Under the old plantation system, St. Kitts had only two classes: planters who controlled the land and the large imported working class (initially slaves). This division also reflected the division between white and black; all legal, political and economic privileges belonged exclusively to the white property owners. In fact, during the period of slavery, the workers were themselves property of the planters. The Emancipation of slaves and the development of the old plantation system brought about a situation in which former slaves, although legally free men,

were tied to the plantations because of the land owners' total control of the land. This left no room for the development of small independent household production - i.e. a peasantry. For this reason, the traditional avenue of social mobility (through the acquisition of land) was closed to Kittitian workers, and both class and caste-like race divisions left white planters on the top of the social hierarchy and black workers at the bottom.

Throughout the 19th Century the free coloured population, with their participation in trading and the legal profession, became increasingly incorporated into the higher class, accompanied by a decline in the predominance of white planters which had begun in the second half of the 18th Century. But the only avenue open to Kittitian workers was emigration to the outside world, and this was tightly controlled to suit the shifting exigencies of the old plantation system. On the one hand, planters used their power to prohibit the emigration of workers at times of economic difficulties (see Chapter Three), and thus maintain a large enough pool of available labour to keep wages very low. But they relaxed the ban on emigration whenever expedient, as a means of offsetting the explosive political tensions of the growing numbers of unemployed, which resulted from increased technological adaptation forcing numbers of workers to leave the plantations. Both these pressures became increasingly acute during the latter half of the 19th Century when economic difficulties forced St. Kitts planters to cut the costs of sugar production. Since that time, many Kittitian workers emigrated to Cuba, Jamaica and Santo Domingo to work on sugar plantations, to the United States to work on cotton plantations, and to Panama to work on the canal project (exact figures are not available).

In summary, Emancipation began the separation of slaves from the plantations, leading eventually to emigration becoming a regular phenomenon for St. Kitts workers, brought on by the advance of technological adaptations and the corresponding increase in economic difficulties. Changes in the St. Kitts class structure began to emerge with the increasing numbers of free coloured people and the return of emigrants, who fill skilled worker and petite bourgeoisie positions such as shop-keepers and tradesmen.

C. Class changes under the modern plantation system

(1) Effect of industrial changes. The establishment of the centralized sugar factory in Basseterre and the subsequent centralization of the organization of production through modern technology resulted on the one hand in further separation of labour from the means of production, and on the other hand in increasing numbers of workers being replaced by machines. Thus, there was an increase in both the productivity of the sugar industry (allowing increased surplus accumulation) and in the exploitation of workers who were forced to compete for fewer jobs without wage increases (wages were stable until the 1935 "riots"). Workers organized in order to meet these adverse conditions, their main aims being to protect their wages and to resist the further introduction of the machinery replacing them. These efforts were eventually transformed into a political struggle against colonial rule, and resulted in the political emancipation of St. Kitts in 1967 (see Chapter Six).

After World War II, the world shortage of sugar brought about further consolidation of the sugar industry and increased productivity in St. Kitts. This meant that more workers were replaced by machines (see Chapter Five) and large numbers of Kittitians emigrated to England during the

1950's and to the U. S. Virgin Islands in the 1960's. Thus by 1969 there was a labour force of over 21,000 in St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, and the sugar industry employed just over 4,000 (about 20% of the labour force as compared to the 1965 figure of 35%). The increase of technological unemployment in the sugar industry is indeed significant in the context of the evolving separation of workers from the means of production. At the end of the 18th Century, for example, St. Kitts had 16,000 slaves working for the plantations, and the cultivated acreage was about 11,000 (Goveia, 1965:121). The cultivated acreage increased to around 18,000 acres during the 19th Century, but at present it is again around 11,000 acres. In other words, with the same amount of acreage under cultivation, the present work force is about one quarter of the 18th Century figure (a reduction of 12,000 workers), while in the same period production increased from between 6,000 and 10,000 tons to around 35,000 tons per annum.

(2) Effect of emigration. The extent to which the people of St. Kitts, especially the workers, no longer depend on the plantation system and its restricted scope of social mobility (especially since the 1950's) can be better understood by the following comparisons.

Income through postal money orders cashed in St. Kitts by the relatives of emigrants in 1965 was \$1,377,076; the total wages earned by the estates sector workers were \$2,466,076, and those earned by factory workers were \$1,107,765. The full extent of income from abroad is unknown due to the fact that many emigrants send money through friends, in the mail, or through banking facilities. For example, during my ten-day visit to interview St. Kitts emigrants to St. Thomas and St. Croix, one informant was asked to deliver several hundred dollars in U. S. currency to various houses around Molyneux. At Christmas time the Government Treasury

pier is full of goods and gifts shipped by emigrants to their relatives, and the banks are full of people cashing money orders sent by emigrants; many emigrants themselves return to visit relatives. Molyneux alone had more than twenty visitors in 1969, coming from as far off as England; the entire village comes alive with excitement at Christmas, and many people wear new clothes sent by relatives. One local store owner told me that he earned more than half (over \$3,000) of his year's income at this time.

The magnitude of the effects of emigration can be illustrated at the village level. Out of 156 households in Molyneux, there are 63 which receive a regular monthly remittance from relatives abroad and 21 which do so on an irregular basis (this does not include families receiving gifts of clothing and food). Of the 63 households, 15 are completely dependent upon these remittances, and of these 15, 5 are composed of a single woman, 3 of a mother and children, 4 of a grandmother and children, 1 of a nuclear family, and 2 were "mixed" (see Chapter Eight for further discussion). There are 4 homes which are now unoccupied as a result of the emigration of the entire household. In the village of Phillips, the picture is about the same. Of the 97 households, there are 36 which receive a regular monthly remittance, and 8 which receive irregular ones. Of the 36, 18 are completely dependent upon this source (a higher rate of dependence than in Molyneux since this village is more dependent upon the estates sector), and of these 7 are composed of a single woman, 6 of a grandmother and children, 2 of a mother and children, 1 of a single man, 1 of a nuclear family, and 1 was "mixed". There are also 15 empty houses belonging to emigrated families.

It is against this background of the increasing importance of remittances from abroad, as a result of technology and changes in the orga-

nization of production, that one must examine changes in the working class itself, and the development of other classes besides the land owners.

(3) Changes in the working class. There have been two noticeable changes in the working class structure; on the one hand, the rapid decline in Union membership (which has traditionally relied upon the sugar industry) and the development of broader occupational categories in addition to the hierarchy between skilled and unskilled workers.

At the end of 1952, there were 5,036 workers belonging to the St. Kitts-Nevis Trades and Labour Union, but by 1965 this figure had dropped to 2,743, a fall of over 54%:

Table 7.1

Membership of the St. Kitts-Nevis Trades and Labour Union

	<u>1952</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>
Allied workers				814	508	419
Sugar Estate Workers				2,091	1,868	1,539
Waterfront Workers				211	179	163
Sugar Factory Workers				643	508	510
Tradesmen				242	131	112
Total Members on Roll 31 Dec.	5,036	4,677	4,773	4,001	3,194	2,743
Members in Arrears on 31 Dec.*		3,020	3,389	1,773	2,029	

* Members become non-financial after being twelve weeks in arrears, but stay on the roll until 31 Dec. of that year. Probably many members fall into arrears after the end of the crop, so that 31 Dec. figures show paid-up membership at its weakest.

(Source: St. Kitts Sugar Commission Report, 1967:5)

Although figures for 1969 - 1970 are not available, the declining trend was noticeable during the period of fieldwork. At the same time, there was an increasing demand for workers in occupational areas other than the plantation system and related areas, particularly in the rapidly growing sector of domestic service. St. Kitts working class women have worked as

seamstresses and domestic servants for landlords in the past, but in recent years this area of service has been increasing very rapidly due to the demands of the growing tourist industry and of the petite bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie classes (see below). The demand for store clerks has also increased. Against these changes can be mentioned the Government's introduction of labour legislation, passing the Act for a Provident Fund (social security) and the Minimum Wage Law in 1969, covering store clerks and domestic servants. In 1970 one Union leader said at a regular meeting that the membership of store clerks and domestic servants had increased rapidly, and that the Union's strength was at its highest point in the history of St. Kitts. I have not been able to obtain figures of the new membership, but at the annual Labour Union convention there was strong representation from these two sectors, which reflects the growth in size and direction of the Labour Union into activities in areas other than its traditional sphere of the sugar industry.

There has also been a growing occupational and income difference among workers due to the introduction of machinery in both the factory and the estates sector. Semi-skilled and skilled workers earn much more than do unskilled workers. For example, tractor drivers and mechanical cane loader operators often earn as much as \$120 to \$150 per week during the harvest season, while cane cutters earn an average of \$12 to \$18 per week. There is therefore increasing friction between cane cutters and loader operators, the former often bitterly complaining that the loader operators cheat them and side with the managers and owners. Many of the cane field disputes involve cutters and loader or tractor operators. Many of the latter have better homes and some drive old cars; nor do they shop in the village, but at a town supermarket. At the same time, loader operators

are scarce and many estates pay them year-round wages (even during the dull season) to prevent their emigration to the U. S. Virgin Islands where their skill is in great demand, especially in the booming tourist construction industry. Also, many estates retain them with special privileges such as driving estate vehicles. One estate loader operator told me proudly that he was able to support fourteen children (nine of them attending primary school) and four women.

(4) Emergence of other classes. (i) Petite Bourgeoisie. A casual observer would note that Kittitians are rapidly integrating into a cosmopolitan culture as far as consumption patterns and style of clothing, radios, and so forth, are concerned. Many houses are very smart, and there are some new ones in the villages which have been paid for out of remittances from emigrants. For example, the house in which I stayed during field work in Molyneux village belonged to a woman who had gone to the United Kingdom; her son had built it with her money so that she could retire there one day. The house is of concrete, with three bedrooms, a bathroom with shower, flush toilet and wash basin, a spacious living room, and a kitchen. It is about 20 ft. by 20 ft., unlike the more conventional house which may be as small as 6 ft. by 8 ft., with a tin roof and board sidings.

A growing number of people (especially those who have worked abroad or who receive extra income from overseas relatives) are moving from traditional working class occupations into jobs of a petite bourgeois nature, such as those of taxi or bus driver, auto repairman or merchant. The children of working people are now able to finish primary and some secondary education, and may go into teaching or become civil servants; some will go to Universities in metropolitan countries or in Barbados, Trinidad

or Jamaica.

People in this class are primarily self-employed, except for teachers and low-level civil servants. Some of the teachers and civil servants have college training, but others are basically semi-skilled. Investigation of the two villages (Molyneux and Phillips) indicated that eight out of the ten stores (including three rum shops) were started either directly by returned emigrants, or with money sent by overseas relatives. All four bus and taxi drivers had driven either trucks or school buses in England or the U. S. Virgin Islands. This class occupies a strategic position in village life. Although they comprise only about 10% of the population, they set the pattern of village activity. Their relative affluence in comparison with the workers' is readily noticeable in the way they dress and talk. At night, they usually occupy the stores or rum shops while the workers cluster around street corners (often without benefit of light, and often sullen and quiet). There is a particularly noticeable feature of these nightly street gatherings which include nearly all the village people. Workers gather together and include both men and women, while the petite bourgeoisie groups usually consist of men only, the women either staying at home or visiting their own friends. This pattern reflects their different experiences and outlook; working men and women have similar life chances and experiences, and have much to share conversations about - usually work and money problems are discussed. Some just listen to music from small transistor radios. (At these nightly gatherings one also sees large numbers of children attracted by the excitement of the noise and the fascination of stories; they are often rewarded for running errands such as fetching more rum or beer and cigarettes). In those villages whose residents include factory workers, there is usually no mixing

between them and estate workers, since the former tend to look down on the others. For example, one factory worker preferred to spend most of his spare time working on his house or flower garden. Among the petite bourgeoisie itself there is a wide variety of occupation and experience, many of them having been abroad. Their conversations over rum often consist of boasting about their experiences in the U. S. Virgin Islands, and therefore they have little in common with their wives. From their metropolitan oriented outlook they tend to criticize other people, especially their wives, Government leaders and estate workers, with a tendency to label anyone with whom they disagree as stupid. They oppose the present Labour Government and usually form alliances with the national bourgeoisie in supporting the opposition party.

To sum up, the petite bourgeoisie and the working class form two distinct social classes, relationships between them being characterised by different life-styles, attitudes of superiority and deference or resentment, and in some cases financial dependence too, reflecting the latter's lack of property ownership.

(ii) National bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie proper, or upper middle class, are predominantly black, and occupy professions in Government, the higher echelons of civil service, law, medicine and accounting. Their population is less than 10% of the total St. Kitts figure, but their numbers seem to have been declining in recent years. The relatively recent acquisition of their status underlies the ambivalence of relationships between them and other social classes. Leaders in the Government and high level civil servants usually support the Labour Party, and their interests are therefore allied with the working class and opposed to those of the petite bourgeoisie, although their education, social status and life-

style are very far removed from the villagers.

Lawyers usually play an opportunistic and ambiguous role, as they are financially independent. Many support the opposition party, but some work closely with the various levels of Government. Doctors are usually brought in from Hong Kong, and tend to stay only the required minimum of time (usually two years).

(iii) Upper class. The relationship between doctors and lawyers and the white upper class (who are the large property and business owners in the island) is also ambivalent, but there has been a growing gap between them in recent years. Although these professions grew up under the colonial government and served the interests of the white upper class, their members are increasingly nationalistic in their attempts to manage and govern the island, representing a direct threat to the white upper class. Clashes between these two classes are increasing. Although the white upper class has been retreating in recent years, it still occupies the top social stratum due to its control over all the major activities in the island, as well as the land. They are known as "sugarcrats", and include the estate owners, attorneys, managers and directors in the two Agency companies, and factory supervisory personnel. All members of this group are either white (and usually of British descent) or "coloured White" (i.e. mulattoes who occupy high social and economic positions). They reside in the manner of feudal lords: most estate owners have lavish homes in the countryside, separated from the villages where they do not venture; many of them have homes in Basseterre too. Attorneys and estate managers also reside in the countryside, again never mixing with villagers. Factory supervisory personnel live mostly in the residential area of Basseterre nearest to the factory.

This class is oriented toward metropolitan England. Their life-style and even speech patterns are modelled on the English, many of them spending holidays or having their children educated in England. Their outlook is conservative, and they often hold reactionary political views. They are contemptuous toward workers and have nothing in common with them.

In recent years, another group of people who are of Portuguese, Lebanese and Syrian descent have gained ownership of about 4% of the arable land. Basically they are merchants without sufficient wealth or social power to be classified as elites. This group tends to support the Government. A member of one family in this group is married to the Premier (Bradshaw). Since they are a minority group, their economic survival depends to a great extent upon their ability to obtain Government protection through the use of political pressure.

Again in recent years, there have been increasing tensions within the white upper class itself due mainly to poor performance in the sugar industry. The division reflects the factory and the estates sectors of the industry (see Chapter Five). The estate owners are directly dependent upon the factory's operation, and in times of difficulty their relationship is extremely strained. To an increasing extent, estate owners are looking toward the national bourgeoisie class (who control political power with the labour leaders) to protect their interests against the British capitalists. Thus during 1969 the Government introduced the Sugar Industry Advisory Board to protect both workers and estate owners against the British capitalists as the result of several successive years of loss sustained by the majority of estates. At the same time, the British capitalist owners of the factory took steps to protect their interests (see Chapter Five). This move by the Government also helped the estate owners

to resist pressures to reorganize themselves into an agro-business unit under the EMCL management scheme (see Chapter Five). In short, there is increasing cooperation between the estate owners and the Government against the British capitalists. The Government's 1969 purchase of the Bourkes Estate (owned by the Boon family - the Thurston Company) is indicative of this growing alliance.

D. Class structure and politics

(1) Introduction. There are at present two political parties in St. Kitts which reflect changes in the class structure. During the twilight years of colonial rule, politics were dominated by the Labour Union (with close overlap between membership and leadership), and the party known as the St. Kitts Democrat Party, supported by the estate owners, their attorneys and managers, and the merchants. However, in 1965 (the year before the unofficial formation of the Associated States) the Democrat Party was disbanded and in its place the People's Action Movement (PAM) was established and entered the contest for political power.

Since 1966 St. Kitts politics has been characterized on the one hand by a more intense struggle between the working class and the estate owners, merchants and the British capitalists with regard to the sugar industry, and on the other hand by the struggle between the Labour Party and the opposition party, PAM, for control of the St. Kitts Government. In a sense these form a single struggle, being an attempt to gain full political and economic independence. In short, St. Kitts politics has become increasingly inward-oriented. Its goal is nation-building through dismantling the colonial economic and social structure of a plantation society and creating a viable alternative. Political decisions appear to have a fundamental priority here, as the provision of this alternative

appears to depend upon the creation of suitable concrete social and economic institutions, and for this it seems essential to obtain the broadly based support of the people of St. Kitts. In turn, the success of the Labour Party (especially Young Labour) will depend largely upon its ability to act as an agent for this social and political transformation.

However, we shall see that the political struggle for this goal is not a simple one involving a clash between working class and landlord/capitalist class. It is much more complex and contradictory, due to the recent changes in the plantation mode of production under the modern plantation system, the extensive application of technology and the corresponding concentration of capital in the factory sector. As already noted, the results of these changes are as follows:

(a) a heavy migration of workers and increasing scarcity of available labour, representing a radical change in the abundant supply of unskilled labour which is of critical importance to the maintenance of the plantation production system.

(b) Simultaneously there has been a corresponding rise in the strength of the Union, resulting in a rapid increase in workers' wages. Thus, the low wage condition which is also critical for the accumulation of a surplus (upon which the plantation system is based) has been changed.

(c) The workers' struggle which led to the achievement of the universal franchise in 1952 and the subsequent formation of the Associated States in 1966, brought about the end of the direct colonial rule and its political structure upon which the plantation system of production depended.

Under these changing conditions, there have been several new trends in St. Kitts politics. As mentioned above, there is a growing

alliance between the Government and the estate owners against the British capitalists. (All the Cabinet Ministers are Union leaders and members of the Labour Party, but almost all of the Deputy Ministers are civil servants from the national bourgeoisie; some Deputy Ministers are also members of the Labour Party, but not Union leaders). This struggle has received its basic support from the working class, especially the factory workers, and some segments of the national bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the opposition party, PAM, has been supported by the petite bourgeoisie, the British capitalists, and some segments of the national bourgeoisie in its struggle against the Government. Workers in the estates sector are conspicuously absent from this account; they support the Labour Union and the Government, but in an ambivalent and rapidly declining way. This is due to two factors:

(a) their feudal-like dependency relationship with the estate owners and managers under the modern plantation system, and

(b) their increasing suspicion that their leaders are "working for the Government" which does not itself always support their interests (this suspicion being realistic; see Chapter Eight).

To the two basic divisions which reflect both the political parties and their struggle and the changing conditions of the sugar industry, another dimension has been added in recent years - namely the increasing involvement of youth and its conflict with the old generation. The Labour Party reflects this split between young and old very clearly (both leaders and estate owners are mostly over fifty) while PAM does not as their leaders are all young people, reflecting the recent origin of this party and the fact that most of its members are drawn from the petite bourgeoisie.

(2) Labour Union politics. For the first time in the history of St.

Kitts, the Labour Union enjoys the support of the Government in its struggle against the sugar industry. Under this favourable political climate, Labour Union politics has broadened its scope and intensity in several ways: wage increases and the improvement of working conditions, the protection and extension of the "closed shop" to industries other than sugar, and social legislation for the workers' benefit. The demand for sizeable wage increases and an improvement of working conditions has brought about very intense and protracted negotiations, and an intense class antagonism between the estate and factory owners and the workers, creating sharper divisions of interest between the classes. At the same time, the Government has deepened the conflict between the estate and factory owners, and this has strengthened its own position, since estate owners have tended to seek protection of their interests by supporting the Government against British capitalists.

Governmental intervention in wage claims has sometimes become necessary and has usually resulted in favour of the workers. Since 1965 there has been a series of delays in sugar cane harvesting due mainly to a deadlock in the negotiations of wages and working conditions on estates (including job security and a restriction on the introduction of machines) between the Labour Union and the Sugar Association. Major wage and bonus increases for sugar workers since 1965 have been obtained through the Government's help. Between the years 1966 and 1970, the increases in terms of percentage of the previous year's rates were 4%, 1%, 4%, 2% and 7½% respectively, in addition to the fixed 5% minimum bonus. After long-delayed negotiations, the harvest started late in March 1967, with a three-year wage increase agreement. The workers were to receive a 4% increase over the previous year, and a 1% increase for 1967 and 1968. But in spite

of the agreement the Union found that workers were again in very adverse circumstances, because of the sudden devaluation of the British pound in November 1967 and the corresponding devaluation of Eastern Caribbean currency. Through Government intervention in February 1968, the Union achieved a special wage increase of 3% which was to come from the Sugar Price Stabilization Fund of Cess. In 1969, negotiations between the Labour Union and the management were again deadlocked. The harvest was delayed until March 12th, at which point the Government had to intervene again, and the Union achieved a 2% increase on the 1968 rates. The Government created a special bill under the title "Sugar Export Cess (Special Wage Increase Fund) Act 1969" by rearranging Cess in order to increase workers' wages.

In 1970 the harvest was delayed into March again, and this was in spite of the fact that negotiations had started earlier than usual. This was partly caused by a factory strike late in 1969. The Labour Union achieved an agreement for a wage increase of 7½% over the 1969 rates, and additional changes were instigated to the benefit of the workers. An incentive scheme was put into effect, involving additional income for workers who harvested over twelve tons of cane in a week:

Table 7.2
Cane Cutting Incentives

<u>Tons of Cane</u>	<u>Extra Income</u>
12 - 14	2%
14 - 16	4%
16 - 18	6%
18 - 20	10%
over 20	15%

(Source: St.Kitts Sugar Association, 1952-69)

This scheme benefits only a small number of workers since most of them

are too elderly to cut over twelve tons. The majority cut between ten and fourteen tons. Nevertheless, they can benefit during certain weeks when cutting a good field. The Union also reached a favourable agreement on a burnt cane cutting rate which had been in dispute for eight years. The general pattern had previously been that there were usually more cane fires on the larger estates compared to the medium or small ones. Nathaniel Raymond, who studied cane fires in St. Kitts, indicated that the reason behind them was mainly "labour disputes" based on the rapid mechanization (since 1945) and overall conditions resulting from the changing nature of the plantation system, i.e.

- (a) shortage of labour;
- (b) changing work patterns;
- (c) overgrown fields; and
- (d) bad labour relations (Raymond, 1967).

He pointed out that cane fires were usually set on overgrown cane fields which had excessive weeds, as these fields had been left uncut from the previous year. There were many cane fires in 1970, and since the burnt cane cutting rate was usually much lower than the normal rate there was a bone of contention between Union and management. Managers insisted on a lower rate of pay for burnt cane because it is easier to cut than normal cane, not involving prior trash-clearing. But the Union insisted that burnt cane involves more dirty work and must be reaped and transported to the factory within three days before the sap sours, so that estate owners were benefitting from burning, since they cut wages and time and had a larger harvest. Should the burnt cane not be reaped, it was insured anyway, so the estate owners did not lose money. However, the shortage of workers and falling sugar production in recent years forced the manage-

ment to give in, and a more realistic rate for burnt cane was agreed upon, i.e. \$1.20 per ton for hand-loading and \$1.51 and \$1.57 respectively for burnt and unburnt cane on machine-loading estates.

Another beneficial development in 1970 was related to the fact that the annual bonus for estate workers had been fluctuating in recent years between 18% (in 1960) and 2% (in 1969), being fixed by the London Company's decision on the allocation of the aggregate bonus. An agreement in 1970 provided for a fixed bonus, a minimum of 5% of the gross wages of workers after the production of 35,000 tons of sugar, and an additional increment of 1½% of the workers' total wages for each 2,000 tons harvested beyond 35,000 tons. Both estate and factory workers received the same fixed rate. These changes altogether meant an increase of about 80% between 1952 and 1966 in the average earnings of a cane cutter; the rate per ton of cut cane was 91¢ in 1952 and \$1.69 in 1966, bringing one man's daily earnings to \$2.73 and \$5.07 respectively, an increase of \$2.34 per day. This may not appear to compare favourably with the apparent 100% wage increases between 1948 and 1955, but if one considers real earning power the picture is better. Moreover, if these figures are considered within the framework of declining sugar production and profits in recent years, they assume greater significance.

The Labour Union also successfully resisted any further introduction of labour-saving machinery without the Union's consent. It also fought the management's attempt to bring in workers from other West Indian islands. The Union also played a key role in passing several items of legislation such as the Sugar Industry Advisory Board Act and the National Provident Fund, which includes a social security Act, minimum wage laws to cover domestic servants and store clerks, and price control on selected

food and other items. For social security, workers contribute 5% of their wages which employers match; this protects workers against accidents and injuries at work, death and retirement. The minimum wage laws were passed especially to protect female workers in these two fast-growing areas.

Late in 1969, after several months of preparation, the Government introduced "The Sugar Industry Advisory Board Act" in the House of Assembly, and it was passed in July 1970. The Board consists of seven persons appointed by the Cabinet Minister responsible for the sugar industry, one being nominated by the sugar factory, one by the estate owners, one by the workers, and the remaining four being appointed by the Cabinet Minister (who is also the Deputy Premier). The duty of this Board is to consider and make recommendations to the Minister concerning the following:-

(a) the best time of the year for reaping sugar cane, and the dates for starting and ending harvests;

(b) the time of year best suited for the commencement of the manufacture of sugar by the factory and the duration of such operations;

(c) treatment of the soil and the development of the most suitable types of sugar cane;

(d) land use, including the question of maximum cultivation of arable land and the production of food crops and livestock;

(e) mechanization and the problem of full employment and effective disposition of the available labour force;

(f) the general question of wages and other working conditions;

(g) the method of paying for cane and its effect upon the workers in both field and factory;

(h) the level of profits payable by the sugar industry, including the question of profit-sharing and the declaration of dividends; the rate

of accretion to sinking funds, and the depreciation and amortisation of capital assets;

(i) accounting systems used and the availability and suitability of such accounts for inspection by the Board or other authorized persons;

(j) the retiring age and pensions of workers in the industry;

(k) industrial relations;

(l) any other matter, whether similar to the above or not, which the Minister or Board might consider as affecting the sugar industry.

The Board has sweeping powers of inspection and investigation in carrying out its duties.

In conclusion, while securing better wages and working conditions in the sugar industry, as well as creating new institutions to protect the workers, Labour Union politics have brought out a sharp and intense class antagonism between estate and factory owners, and the workers. Class interests have been more clearly defined, and workers have improved their situation through the Union and the legislative power of the Government, and successfully resisted the further introduction of machinery into the industry - particularly into the estates sector.

(3) Political parties and issues. As mentioned above, PAM was established in 1965; its Leader, Dr. W. Herbert, Jr., is a son of the factory Welfare Officer, and is a young man with a Ph.D. degree obtained in the United Kingdom. PAM's greatest support comes from Basseterre and the countryside merchants, teachers and taxi drivers (i.e. from the petite bourgeoisie) and it has large support from Kittitians living abroad, especially those who have emigrated to the U. S. Virgin Islands. According to one labour leader, the majority of the estate owners and managers, and the wealthy merchants supported PAM in the 1966 election. This was partly

due to the fact that PAM represented the opposition to the Labour Party, and partly to Dr. Herbert's connection with the factory management. Twice during the period of field work a series of political rallies were held by this party, and I noted that several estate managers, overseers and their families attended. Estate owners and wealthy merchants do not necessarily support PAM as a class, and in fact there is a certain alliance between the Labour Party and the sugar industry (for example, the latter's contribution of a large sum). This may not have been the case before 1966 when PAM came into existence, and it is quite possible that the sugar industry contributes to both parties, but more so to the one in Government in order to protect their economic interests. PAM has not made any policy statement regarding the future of the sugar industry, and so far it has made the development of tourism a major issue (i.e. as an alternative to the concentration on cane cultivation in the use of land). Since its inception, PAM has consistently attacked the Government's "hostile" attitude towards tourism, and repeatedly points out that it has resulted in stagnation of the country's development as compared to other West Indian islands. This attack had an important impact in terms of galvanizing the public, especially at a time of rapid change and problems in the sugar industry. PAM made political capital out of social discontent in this respect, and went so far as to accuse the Labour Party of having made an agreement with the sugar industry not to develop tourism; Labour was considered to be a "stooge" of the sugar industry since throughout its history it had opposed any alternative economic development in St. Kitts. PAM has not made any policy statement itself in this regard, but has championed "free enterprise" in general and has opposed the Government's planned and controlled development of tourism.

PAM lost the election in 1966 and even failed to elect its leaders to the House of Assembly. The party's major support came from the islands of Nevis and Anguilla, both of which elected one PAM supporter. PAM's attack on the Government concerning tourism seems to have come mainly from these two islands, where there is more potential for that industry. These islands have to some extent felt exploited by St. Kitts in the past, as many Nevisians and Anguillans emigrated there to seek employment. Some of the remarks made by Mr. Bradshaw seem to have aggravated this feeling of alienation, and the tourism issue might have served as a focus of their discontent. This discontent, supported by PAM, brought about a constitutional crisis on June 10th 1967. PAM leaders were allegedly involved in the attempt by some Anguillans to overthrow the Labour Government by landing with arms in St. Kitts; the Government declared a State of Emergency and the PAM leaders were arrested. Anguilla declared its secession from the union, leading to the landing of British troops.

Although the Labour Party has controlled the Government since 1966, it cannot be blamed for the lack of a tourist industry, because St. Kitts economic conditions began to deteriorate before Labour assumed power. The new Government had to face the more immediate problems of the sugar industry in addition to the necessity of creating national institutions to effect the transition from colonial structures. The Labour Party in their turn accused PAM of being a "stooge" of the sugarcrats, and claimed that key PAM leaders were "traitors" to the interest and well-being of the islands. After the June 10th incident, they were indicted, brought to trial, and eventually left the island (some wealthy white foreigners, all British, Canadian or American, were also expelled).

The top leader of PAM came back to St. Kitts in the summer of 1968

(having pursued medical studies in the meantime), and another came back in December 1969. While they had been away (and during the State of Emergency which lasted over nine months), the Labour Party had time to organize itself as the governing party, and to tackle many important issues. The leaders repeatedly made the point that the people of St. Kitts had no desire to change one master for another (i.e. British for American) by accepting tourism as some other West Indian islands had done; any tourist development was to be controlled by the Government in order to ensure that no "foreign enclave" developed on St. Kitts soil. They bought Frigate Bay land and earmarked it for future tourist development, asserting that if it occurred too soon it would simply strengthen traditional class structures and improve the economic position of landowners and businessmen, thus perpetuating what one labour leader called an unacceptable condition of economic slavery. The Pioneer Industry Act did subsequently provide encouragement for foreign investment with a tax concession. The Frigate Bay tourism project was eventually initiated. In 1969 the Government initiated its Five Year Social-Economic Development Plan, involving some \$60 million, mostly designated for tourism and related projects (such as airports, utilities, and roads). A major effort to diversify the St. Kitts economy and to protect it from its traditional dependence upon sugar had begun.

The Labour Party began tackling the problems of the sugar industry itself on two fronts. The National Provident Fund and minimum wage laws brought better wages, conditions and protection for workers. The 1970 Sugar Industry Advisory Board Act provided, for the first time in St. Kitts history, that the sugar industry should come under public supervision and control in its planning, management, level of profits. etc., be-

coming more responsible to the people of St. Kitts. According to the minister who sponsored the bill, it was designed both to prevent the collapse of the sugar industry by default and to be a step toward the control of the industry by the people of St. Kitts. The Labour Party leaders clearly do not wish the sugar industry to collapse during the increasingly difficult years ahead. With British entry into the Common Market, there may be a loss of St. Kitts sugar protection under the present Commonwealth Sugar Agreement, then the consequent possibility of a sudden folding up of sugar production operations by both estate owners and factory.

The two present political parties reflect the class divisions and corresponding occupations in St. Kitts. The Labour Party has traditionally represented labour, and now has growing membership from white collar workers. PAM has from its inception received support from white estate owners and managers, and now has important membership from the petite bourgeoisie. But the fundamental importance of party politics in St. Kitts at present is related to the sugar industry and the ramifications of the modern plantation system which have been referred to throughout this thesis. Unlike the case of some other post-colonial societies where political power was transferred from the colonial authority to a national middle class, there has been no significant middle class in St. Kitts until very recently. Since the very existence of a colonial middle class often depends upon the economic dependence of their country on the metropolis, formal political independence has little real meaning when this class comes to power. The colony often degenerated into a state of neo-colonialism, which was not the case in St. Kitts since the mobilization of working class political power made easier the process of dismantling the basis of colonial structures.

(4) Political generations. It was noted that the world sugar market expanded after World War II, and that St. Kitts sugar production facilities increased rapidly after the establishment of the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement in 1951. Between 1953 and 1963, the major expansion in St. Kitts was through technological change applied to factory production and to transportation and equipment on the estates. There have been corresponding rapid social changes, such as an expansion in education and housing, and an initiation of health programs. Molyneux village was constructed (with both a school and a clinic) as were other new villages. From the political angle, this was a period of rapid change toward self-government with the introduction of universal suffrage in 1952; all these changes had an impact on the characteristics of the St. Kitts population.

Technological changes in the plantation system resulted in heavy emigration of working people between 16 and 45 years of age, especially the over-30's in this group, these being the major labour source for the estates. Another result of these technological changes is the large number of young (16 - 30) in St. Kitts who are not significantly involved in the plantation system. According to a survey of Young Labour which I undertook in 1969, 34 (58%) out of 59 questioned (i.e. about 45% of the total Young Labour membership) were employed. Of these, the majority (31 or 91%) were engaged in non-agricultural work (see Tables 7.3 and 7.4), and only 19 (56%) of these were satisfied with their present occupation. These young people were mostly under 25 years of age, and the majority of them were between 16 and 20 years (see Table 7.5). In short there were large numbers of young people in St. Kitts who are either unemployed or underemployed under the existing social and economic structure of the sugar industry's domination. These facts seem to indicate that in spite

Table 7.3Young Labour: Male Occupation Distribution

	<u>Occupation held and desired</u>	<u>Presently employed</u>	<u>Satisfied with work</u>
Labour	1	3	1
Agriculture	1	0	0
Carpentry, masonry	4	3	3
Mechanics, welding, electrician	6	4	2
Engineers, draftsmen, lab. technicians	6	0	0
Doctors and lawyers	3	0	0
Teaching	2	1	1
Civil servants, clerical	9	6	3
Students		(7)	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total:	26	17	10

Table 7.4Young Labour: Female Occupation Distribution

	<u>Occupation held and desired</u>	<u>Presently employed</u>	<u>Satisfied with work</u>
Domestic servant	0	8	3
Secretary, clerical	14	5	2
Civil servants (police)	2	0	0
Nursing	10	0	0
Teaching	5	4	4
Technician (vete- rinarian, elect- rician)	2	0	0
Students		(5)	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total:	33	17	9

Table 7.5
Young Labour: Age Distribution

<u>Age</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Below 16	3	6
16 - 20	18	28
21 - 25	5	8
Total:	26	42

of rapid social and political changes the St. Kitts sugar industry and the life experiences it causes are still "oppressive". This is a major reason for young people's not seeking work on estates in spite of vacancies there; there is a generation phenomenon which clearly distinguishes between the younger and older generations. New life experiences are consolidated in this younger generation in such a way that there were no significant socializing effects on this generation from the style of life under the old plantation dominated system, with its corresponding patterns of experiences, thought and expression. St. Kitts is therefore unlike some static or very slowly changing societies (e.g. feudal and peasant) which do not demonstrate the phenomenon of a new generation socially distinguishable from its predecessor, as the tempo of change is so gradual.

The new generation can be seen in the occupational aspirations of the young as compared to their parents. Out of 77 parents of the Young Labour sample, 36 (46%) are employed as labourers, mostly on the estates and in dock work in Basseterre. This is the very occupation that Young Labour do not desire to hold. In Mannheim's words (1964), this generation does not "participate in the common destiny" when it comes to occupations. Table 7.6 refers to this generation difference. In reply to the question "Is politics discussed in the family?", 34 answered "yes".

Table 7.6

Young Labour: Parental Occupations

	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Total</u>
Labourer	22	14	36
Domestic servant	0	4	4
Estate overseer, watchman, overlooker	4	0	4
Carpenter, mason	7	0	7
Mechanic, plumber	4	0	4
Driver (bus, tractor, chauffeur)	5	0	5
Teacher	2	1	3
Shopkeeper	0	2	2
Tailor	2	2	4
Civil servant	8	0	8
Total:	54	23	77

However, 70 replied that their friends also belong to Young Labour, which indicates the significance of the friendship circle in political learning and participation. There is a marked difference between males and females in this respect:

Table 7.7

"I discuss politics and government with my friends".

	<u>Male</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>%</u>
Never	1	3.6	18	43.9
Hardly ever, less than once a week	2	7.1	13	31.7
A fair amount, once a week	10	35.8	4	9.8
Fairly often, almost every day	13	46.4	3	7.3
Very often, every day	2	7.1	3	7.3
Total:	28	100%	41	100%

But this difference is not apparent in regard to political participation:

Table 7.8

"I try to take time for student debates and political meetings".

	<u>Male</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>%</u>
Whenever they are held	12	44.4	12	30.0
Almost every time they are held	8	29.7	12	30.0
Sometimes, but not very often	5	18.5	9	22.5
Hardly ever	1	3.7	1	2.5
Never	1	3.7	6	15.0
Total:	27	100%	40	100%

Similarly,

Table 7.9

"I am interested in the political affairs of the State"

	<u>Male</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>%</u>
Not at all	2	7.1	4	9.8
Very little	0		5	12.2
A fair amount	7	25.0	11	26.8
A great deal	19	67.9	21	51.2
Total:	28	100%	41	100%

In short, the sample of Young Labour indicates that the majority of both males and females are interested in politics and participate in political gatherings, but that there is a difference between the sexes in the discussion of politics among friends. It may be observed that political discussion often leads to fist fights; sometimes violent arguments break out between very close friends, even between father and sons. Most informants felt that political discussions led to "stupid behaviour" and therefore made a conscious effort not to become involved in one (especially in the presence of women, which perhaps helps to explain the sex difference in political discussion). Political feelings are very intense in St. Kitts; even seating in church reflects affiliations, with Labour supporters on one side of the aisle and PAM people on the other.

One has the distinct impression that the new generation is more lively. They are also more skill-oriented than older generations have been, and the majority do not yet have the responsibility of a household and tend to remain single (although some have illegitimate children). This is largely a reflection of their refusal to participate in a plantation based productive life, and the fact that there are few opportunities for other employment anyway. Many of them therefore spend very little time at home doing housework, and instead spend a great deal of time with their friends, "feting", playing games, drinking, participa-

ting in sexual activities and fighting. In short, they belong to a street gang rather than to a household, and this provides them both with experience of cooperation and conflict, and with their social esteem. According to the Young Labour survey, this generation has an average of eleven years of schooling, some having passed "O" level British G.C.E. examinations, thus being far more educated than their parents. They also take more advantage of technology, as exemplified by their use of automobiles, air travel, transistor radios, cameras, cinemas, new style clothes, etc. They are also much better informed than older generations about what is going on both in their country and elsewhere. For example, many older people could not believe that men had landed on the moon, while the younger people simply accepted this as another technological achievement.

However, this generation is much less secure where jobs are concerned than older generations have been, not only because of high unemployment and underemployment but also because they are keenly aware that their aspirations cannot be satisfied under the economic domination of the sugar industry. This helps to explain why many have emigrated, for as well as having more initiative and being more aggressive and optimistic than their elders, they become more deeply frustrated by the lack of opportunity. In this way they are much like black people in the United States (Liebow, 1967). It is not uncommon to find a 20-year old man shifting not only from one job to another, but also between different occupations, while the older generation tend to shift only between jobs in the same category, or at least within the range of manual jobs. Many of the younger generation form an educated lumpenproletariat; they live under a great deal of uncertainty and tension. Young women often experience additional problems as they have to carry the burden of raising children and are themselves sub-

jected to worse economic discrimination. By and large, young people are therefore dissatisfied with their life situation and with the minimal progress they feel their Government is making. Some of them have joined the youth wings of political parties and actively advocate a much faster rate of change in such issues as minimum wage laws, nationalization of the sugar industry, development of tourism, and so on. Ideologically they are strongly nationalistic and accept the tenets of anti-colonialism and anti-racism. An increasing number advocate revolution and socialism, while other want less radical action and advancement through bringing in foreign capital and industry. These new attitudes are resulting in the increased political importance of the younger generation. They are an important source of changing class consciousness and allegiance, and correspondingly participate in the socio-historic development of their nation state. As they are capable of binding together, they alone can make possible the new political programs which depend upon integrative attitudes. As a political generation, they have a very important effect on the rest of the population in the present struggle for full political and economic independence. Not only can they influence the future of the sugar industry, but, more important, the future direction of the St. Kitts polity.

The significance of changes becomes even more apparent if the concept of political generations is examined in a broader theoretical context. The formation of political generations is often connected theoretically and historically to social movements based on concrete life experiences. It is an accumulative process, and involves communication and awareness among people who live through the same historical-structural experiences and come to form a concrete group which is distinguishable

along both political and generational lines. It involves an awareness, especially among young intellectuals, of the larger issues inherent in the structure of society itself, and is therefore often linked to discontent, rebellion and revolution. This process is what Mannheim calls

substantial rationality; i.e. the capacity to act intelligently in a given situation on the basis of one's own insight into interrelations of events

as opposed to

functional rationality; i.e. the organization of activity of members of society with reference to objective ends (Mannheim, 1964:512. See also Keniston, 1968).

Modern capitalism and imperialism has presented different people all over the world with common experiences. The struggle of colonized people, whether in Africa, the West Indies or anywhere else, has usually led to the formation of political generations in those countries. These movements may also be linked with the increasing numbers of young people in the industrialized nations who reject the present "inhuman exploitative and oppressive" system, so that together they represent pressure toward the creation of a new world system. There is, in a sense, a world-wide political generation which not only cuts across class lines, but across ethnic, cultural and national boundaries as well. The modern political generation of St. Kitts is part of this general pattern.

Eisenstadt pointed out that a "youth ideology" often develops in anti-colonial movements:

The essence of these ideologies (from the point of view of an analysis) is that the changes which they advocate and struggle for are more or less synonymous with rebellion against the "old" order and generation - a rebellion of youth, a manifestation of the rejuvenation of national and social spirit. In them the usual modern emphasis on youth as bearers of the com-

mon values of the community - in these cases of the new type of values - is accentuated and geared to realization of the movement's political and social goals (Eisenstadt, 1964:311)

The work of Zeitlin and Mannheim provides a similar perspective:

Common experiences during their youth might create a common world view or frame of reference through which individuals of the same age group would tend to view their subsequent political experiences (Zeitlin, 1967:213) (emphasis added).

Therefore the effect of common experiences limits its members to a

Specific range of potential experiences, pre-disposing them for a certain characteristic mode of thought and experience, and a characteristic type of historically relevant action (Mannheim, 1964:290-291).

Although historically relevant actions are often spearheaded by youth, they do not exclude adults. It may be concluded that

(a) different political generations are formed in a complex society as a result of the impact on them of distinct historical experiences derived from social structural changes;

(b) responses of the different generations to change is understandable in terms of these experiences; and

(c) political behaviour and actions characterizing a society can be understood in terms of political generations.

In short, this concept focusses on the intersection of biography, history and social structure in order to explain social and political changes in modern society. The following example will substantiate this claim.

(5) Young Labour. Prior to the 1966 general election, both PAM and the Labour Party organized their youth wings, known as PAMites and Young Labour respectively. These groups were run by young leaders who had

recently returned from advanced studies in the United Kingdom or the University of the West Indies, and their membership includes people between the ages of 14 and 30. (These concrete groups do not provide significant voting power, as the majority of members are still under the legal voting age of 21). Young Labour has been selected for a study of political generations for several reasons. Even though antagonistic factions have emerged within the new St. Kitts generation, together they do constitute a political generation, for they share ideas bound up with the unfolding of a common political destiny in which they also participate. This becomes clearer if the conflicts between older and younger members of each political party are taken into account; the divergent opinions between Young Labour and its parent body (the St. Kitts-Nevis Trades and Labour Union) form a good example. In the first place, Young Labour is intent upon revitalizing existing political programs. Their relationship with the older generation in the party is the key problem of success or failure in the process of decolonization and nation-building. These are very difficult tasks; jobs must be created for the rapidly increasing young population, and this may require the reorganization of the entire colonial, sugar-based economy. (My survey indicates that less than half of the young people who joined Young Labour have also joined the Labour Union, although at 15 or 16 they meet the age qualification. The problems of fusing between old and young are social and political problems; many Young Labour members would not join the parent body without significant changes being undertaken within it).

A further reason for selecting Young Labour rather than the PAMites is that they are better organized and have many coherent political programs. Moreover, I was able to observe and participate in both Young

Labour's and the Trades Union's annual conventions, and their weekly and monthly meetings; it was also possible to administer questionnaires to a number of Young Labour members. PAMites did not have these significant events and their leaders had less cooperative attitudes which were probably derived from their uncomfortable defensive postures whenever I raised questions about neo-colonialism and problems in the sugar industry. (However, a comparison will be made with the PAMite opinions collected in Molyneux and Phillips). Finally, current Government leaders are members of both the Labour Party and the Labour Union. The task of building a Labour Party as an effective mass political party in the decades ahead will be dependent on Young Labour's ability to expand and revitalize its social basis of power in a rapidly changing structure. Their success or failure will determine the transmission of governmental power from the current political generation. (Several Young Labour leaders attempted to hold an annual convention of the Labour Party to organize for the first time, but it did not materialize).

The new integrative attitudes and formative principles of Young Labour are at present centered around the ideologies of "Black Power", "Socialism" and "Revolution", of which the first has so far had the most significant impact on the people of St. Kitts. This is shown by the political attacks made by the opposition party against this political doctrine since it is seen as discouraging North American investment. It is also opposed by older members of the Labour Party to some extent, but it does have some very positive aspects. Through political education forums in the past three years it has had a remarkable effect in "liberating" the historically "oppressed black minds"; for example, there is increasing notice and acceptance of Afro-dress and hair styles, which are sometimes

worn even on formal occasions, for example, by the Deputy Premier and his wife. Thus, there has been a remarkable breakdown of colonial racism and white supremacy with its roots in slavery, the master-slave relationship, and the corresponding economic, legal and social inequality. At the open meeting of the 135th anniversary of the Emancipation, one of the young leaders exposed the myth of white supremacy by attacking the idea that the black people were "lazy, inferior people" during the slavery period, since they were in fact the backbone of the whole plantation system, being the labour force which produced huge profits for white men (who were the really lazy ones); moreover, that the descendants of these slave masters are still in economic control of the islands, and that the black people are therefore not yet fully free.

In the past two years, the emphasis on Black Power has been especially noticeable in relation to the economics of the sugar industry. A great deal of emphasis was placed on this issue, not only by the members of Young Labour and their leaders, but also frequently in speeches by the Premier, stating that the Labour Party and the present Government intended to lead the struggle to take over the sugar industry for the people of St. Kitts. As a concrete step in this direction, the Sugar Industry Advisory Board Act was passed in July 1970. Two leaders of Young Labour have been elected to this Board, one to represent the workers and the other as Chairman. Before this Bill was introduced, over 150 delegates from 15 different branches of Young Labour passed a resolution at the 1969 annual convention that "the Government shall acquire the Sugar Industry as a matter of urgency". There was a concerted effort both by Young Labour leaders and the Government to provide political education for the passage of this Bill, as well as to create grass roots support.

The ideology of Black Power as a new integrative and formative principle in St. Kitts politics is based on a clear-cut class conception by the members of Young Labour as a result of the people's experiences under both the old plantation system and the new organization of the sugar industry, especially the recent struggles between the Labour Union and the management of the sugar industry. Furthermore, they perceive that, by and large, if people are failures it is through no fault of their own, but because of the condition of the society in which they live. Thus, they seem to feel that as long as the present social structures are maintained, their economic and political aspirations cannot be achieved. From this one can understand why they place such importance on the well-being of the nation and its people, and advocate a change in the sugar industry so that it will be in the hands of the St. Kitts people. Members of Young Labour also advocate minimum wage laws and guaranteed annual income legislation to end the present economic exploitation by the capitalists who control the sugar industry, and specific measures such as taxing the rich more heavily and providing specific social amenities to redress the present ills.

As a leading concrete group of a new political generation, Young Labour also advocates that their parent party should take concrete steps to provide more jobs to alleviate the already very high unemployment in this generation. The economic aspects of Black Power are therefore concretely interrelated both with the historical and structural problems of the sugar industry and with the aspirations and motivations of this new political generation. The structural conflicts between the ownership of the means of production and the relations of production are a necessary condition of change; together with the emergence of a coherent ideology

explaining these conflicts among large sectors of the population, the sufficient conditions of change are met. In short, subjective conditions are as necessary for change as are the objective ones. There must be a basis for "participation in the common destiny" in their daily lives by a sector of the population, as this provides a framework for predisposing them towards a certain characteristic mode of thought and experience, and consequently to historically relevant political action. In recent years, this framework was created in St. Kitts mainly by rapid technological change which produced a series of rather rapid social and political changes within the world wide political climate of decolonization; the magnitude and comprehensiveness of the present Black Power political program is quite new.

The principle of "Revolution" is related to Black Power political programs, since it refers to a more revolutionary change in the social and economic areas, especially dismantling the colonial and capitalist system of sugar production and replacing it with new institutions. This principle also applies, to some extent, to the revolutionary change of some of the existing political institutions, and is therefore somewhat confused with the notion of Black Power. The Cabinet position of a Young Labour leader creates further confusion. Revolution often implies the toppling of the existing government and corresponding change, and confusion about this is reflected in response to the statement, "We need revolution in St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla before conditions will improve to any great extent" which I included in the Young Labour Survey; 42 agreed and 19 disagreed, either because they did not agree with revolution per se, or because they were satisfied with the progress the present government is making.

The principle of "Socialism" is not understood very well by members

of Young Labour, and there is a great deal of confusion about it. It is a most comprehensive doctrine that incorporates both Black Power and Revolution. Resolution No. 2 at the Young Labour 1969 Annual Convention advocates the following:

that the Labour Movement set out a more concrete programme as a means towards a more socialist society and in particular to cover:

- (a) reform of land tenure and land usage,
- (b) full mobilisation of the economic resources of the country,
- (c) more equal distribution of returns from production,
- (d) public involvement in major industrial and commercial concerns,
- (e) abolition of privilege based on class, colour, religion, and/or family background.

As already noted, Black Power ideology has led to a concrete tackling of issues relating to item (e), with very enthusiastic support which will likely lead to early success. However, many members of Young Labour are still in the process of formulating concrete programs on item (d); for example, in spite of their understanding that the well-being of the nation is dependent upon its industry and business, they are not altogether certain that nationalization of the sugar industry and other business is the way to solve their problems. There is a fine line of distinction in that the Young Labour resolution calls specifically for "public involvement", whereas the Survey question referred to the question of "Government taking over". Thus it seems that although Young Labour supports the legislative and executive roles of the Government in providing more jobs, social security, etc., they do not seem to be over-enthusiastic about Government ownership or control of industry. This is explained partly by the fact that "public involvement" has not been defined or organized into concrete

programs. More important, there is a significant sector of Young Labour who believe Socialism to mean that there will be more people like themselves participating in the national decision-making process which shapes their lives. Programs for items (a), (b) and (c) are still not clearly formulated, and involve the implementation of existing laws and regulations. Tables 7.10, 7.11, and 7.12 summarize Young Labour attitudes to some of these issues.

In conclusion, St. Kitts politics has entered a new stage, in which a new political generation is playing a vital role by propagating new principles which have increasing importance as a new driving political force for creating a radical alternative to the plantation based colonial and capitalist society. There is increasing concern among Young Labour that what has happened in Antigua, Trinidad and Jamaica will not be repeated in St. Kitts, based upon a growing sense of independence; they no longer look toward these larger islands to take the lead in the development of St. Kitts. They point out that many West Indian islands (especially the three mentioned) have paid a very high price for having developed extensive tourism, and the consequences have been far-reaching. As nations, they have literally changed from British to American masters; thus decolonization and the creation of viable new nationhood have been seriously compromised, their efforts being restricted by the narrow North American capitalist conception of economic development. The result of this type of economic progress has created further economic inequality, social injustice, and a great deal of unemployment. Foreign investment has been selective and largely irrelevant to local needs. As was the case in the plantations of the past, black people serve and please white people.

All this is firmly rejected by Young Labour, but has some support

Table 7.10

Young Labour: Class Perception

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
Big business wants to destroy the present St. Kitts Government	65	4
Economic depressions and wars are caused by a system of private ownership and control of business and industry	60	4
The rich are getting richer while the poor are getting poorer	62	7
The community would be better off getting rid of immoral, crooked and feeble-minded people	57	8
Most people are failures not because of their fault but because of the society in which they live	59	9
Man is not greedy by nature but a society where money is valued most forces him to be greedy	51	13
People who say that Trade Unions are too strong must be too blind to see what is going on around them	61	3
There are two kinds of people in this world; those who are for the truth and those who are against the truth	64	4

TABLE 7.11

YOUNG LABOUR: PERCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN
SOLVING SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
The best way to attain economic security is for the Government to guarantee that people don't work for less than a certain amount yearly	56	7
The best way to solve our financial problems is by making the rich pay a lot more taxes	46	20
The Government ought to see that everybody who wants to work can find a job	54	14
The Government ought to help people get a doctor and hospital care at no cost	44	21
Only ignorant and selfish people oppose our National Provident Fund	66	5
The well being of a nation depends mainly on its industry and business	56	6
The Best way to get a better living is for the Government to take over most industry and business	56	15
It is usually troublemakers and the uninformed who talk in favour of the Government taking over ownership of industries, etc.	41	26
If the Government takes over the ownership of big industries, etc., it is NOT likely to lead to better organization and production	33	34

TABLE 7.12YOUNG LABOUR: LEADERSHIP & AUTHORITY

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
It is often better to wait until you have had a chance to hear the opinions of those you respect before you take a side	57	9
One of the worst things to happen is for a person to be ungrateful and disrespectful to his parents	67	4
Every person should have complete faith in some kind of Church whose decisions he obeys without question	43	20
Man on his own is a helpless and miserable creature	49	19
In this complicated world of ours, the only way we can know what is going on is to rely on leaders or experts who can be trusted	49	18
Obedience and respect for authority are the most important principles children should learn	66	1
One should try to avoid teaching children to obey without asking questions	48	20
It is up to our leaders to make decisions for us; we just don't have the information at hand which is necessary to make decisions about Government	45	20
Rights don't belong to individuals; they belong to States	35	29
It will always be necessary to have a few strong, able people actually running everything	38	25

from the older generation of Labour leaders. Indeed, there is growing conflict between Young Labour, which advocates the nationalization of the sugar industry, Black Power and Socialism, and the older leaders who are governing groups with a desire to maintain the sugar industry and their alliance with the estate owners. This struggle between political generations seems likely to be intensified in the future, as the young people appear to be increasingly impatient with the progress made so far by their Government toward providing the jobs which they desire, namely, in areas other than the plantation system. The increasing conflict between them could push the society further forward, as the struggles it engendered would enable the younger generation to achieve an increasing comprehension of the totality and contradictions of the society, and would therefore be more inclined to take a decisive political role in shaping St. Kitts future.

E. Summary

This chapter has shown how the political attitudes and struggles connect up with class divisions and with features of the economy. Although the people of St. Kitts have now obtained a measure of freedom, they continue to be beset with the problems of any single-industry economy; the sugar industry itself continues to be in the hands of a local elite as well as overseas capitalists. As a result, there are increasing demands for its nationalization, especially among the younger political generation. The older generation have less desire for the construction of a socialist society, so that there is some uneasiness among different sections of the populace about their exact political future.

CHAPTER EIGHT

COMMUNITY - VILLAGE STRUCTURE

A. Introduction

In this chapter I will describe the social relationships which exist in two St. Kitts villages, based on a study of Molyneux and Phillips, where I stayed during field work. In spite of the changes which the organization of production has undergone in recent years, the majority of sugar industry workers still reside in the villages and are still basic to the operation of both the estates and the factory. It is argued here that village structure has changed rapidly in recent years, due mainly to the villagers' increasing independence of the estates. Most villages were originally built by planters as workers' quarters. The situation in which the workers were controlled throughout history by the plantation mode of production through its hold over the villages themselves as well as in other ways no longer exists. This is partly due to the increasing importance of the villages which were created during the 1950's, the increasing importance of the teachers, clerks and shop keepers (i.e. the petite bourgeoisie) in community leadership, and the growing involvement of the national Government in village affairs, through the establishment of public clinics, schools and community councils.

This trend has been accompanied by the growing emigration of working class people between 30 and 45 years of age. Nowadays, estate workers are mostly elderly, the younger ones having emigrated, while the under-30's who remain are engaged in non-estate occupations (due to their higher levels of education and the increasing demand in other sectors for semi-skilled workers). Changes in village structure have therefore been characterized by increasing independence from the estates. To state this

from another perspective, the estates can no longer control the supply of labour.

Section B will describe the structure and organization of the villages of Molyneux and Phillips. Section C will describe the occupations and some population changes. Section D will examine the nature of household composition and its changes under the impact of technology and a new organization of production. Section E will cover changes in the nature of interpersonal relations among villagers, with the emphasis on those between workers and owners or managers.

B. Structure and organization of the village

Molyneux village was created in 1954 as part of a resettlement program of people from "bush" villages (this being one result of working class struggle and the achievement of universal franchise in 1952 as Chapter Six showed). Up to this time, the overwhelming majority of estate workers had occupied estate-owned houses on the estates themselves. Geographic information about both Molyneux and Phillips was given in Chapter Two.

Electricity and piped water have been provided in St. Kitts since the late 1940's, but in Molyneux only houses along the main street have these services, and most residents have to carry water in buckets from common standpipes, of which there is one on each street.

The majority of Molyneux village houses are owned by the occupants, except those on estate land. A large number of houses and land in Phillips belongs either to Molyneux or Mansion Estates, but in recent years greater numbers of occupants have become owners too. The estate usually charges \$6 to \$10 rent per month.

Phillips village was scheduled to be torn down in 1952, with the

resettlement of all its inhabitants in Molyneux. However, the new village was not large enough, and so Phillips still exists twenty years later. It has no electricity, piped water, mail delivery, bus service or telephones. This contrasts with Molyneux, where these amenities are common, along with a primary school attended by children from Molyneux, Phillips and Lower Bourryeau. Furthermore, Molyneux is a centre for cultural, commercial and political activities for the surrounding villages. For most cultural activities (e.g. youth clubs, church organizations, Christmas plays, music, dancing and sports), the Molyneux school complex is used. During my stay, a travelling cinema company began providing services; every Monday night a movie was shown at the Molyneux Estate machinery shed building (admission costs being 50¢ for adults and 25¢ for children). There is no Court or police station in Molyneux, but the area is served by the Tabernacle police station, while judicial cases are taken either to Sandy Point or to Basseterre.

Commercial activities in Molyneux are aided by the availability of transportation and communication with Basseterre, and this is of particular importance to Phillips, part of Mansion and Lower Bourryeau. For example, two merchants with stores in Molyneux have additional ones in Phillips; their business originated in the latter, but they now operate mainly out of Molyneux. Phillips has a total of four stores, but only the two main ones are important, these being general stores and connected with Molyneux ownership. The other two are very small rum shops where male villagers drink and gamble. They are often being closed down due to their sale of "local Hammond" (contraband rum). Molyneux has a total of seven stores: one selling clothing, drugs and hardware, and two selling liquor only, while the rest specialize in provisions (two of them

carrying liquor too). Most of the goods are bought in Basseterre and delivered to Molyneux and then to Phillips. This system also covers postal services; every morning, the postman arrives at Molyneux by bus and usually several people from Phillips take the entire village's mail up.

There are two village organizations which reflect the traditional dependence on the estate. One consists of the various Christian churches which have great significance for the village people. In Molyneux and Phillips the largest one is a Catholic Church to which the priest comes from Basseterre every Sunday. There are four small fundamentalist Protestant churches; both the Anglican and Moravian Churches are located in Christ Church Parish (to which Molyneux and Phillips belong). The Catholic Church tends to attract the higher income bracket people from surrounding villages (as there are only four Catholic Churches in the island, while Anglican Churches are located in each of the nine parishes). Women and older people are the most active in church attendance and events; young people tend to be less enthusiastic. Many workers belong to the Anglican or Moravian Churches, but their attendance is not regular and their beliefs are typically supernatural, tending to help justify their wretched condition in such terms as "God's will", "sin", "evil spirits" and "punishment". Among the fundamentalist churches (The Church of God, Baptist, Pentecostal, and Seventh-Day Adventists), the emotional quality of the service tends to reflect the entertainment tastes of the people, but these churches are not really revivalistic. It is very common to find several professed church affiliations in one household; the survey indicates as many as four or five different church affiliations with frequently changing membership, which seems to reflect the atomized and

highly fragmented household structure, and the mobility of the rural proletariat.

Another important kind of community organization is found in the Heart and Hand, and Black and White, Benevolent Societies which meet once a month. Many members pay dues of 12¢ per week for sickness and death benefits. Funerals are lavish by local standards, costing several hundred dollars; they are community rather than family affairs. A Society member's funeral procession must be attended by all members with their uniforms, a flag being carried by the leader. Most members are over 50 years of age; the younger and more prosperous villagers take out insurance policies to cover sickness and death.

The Community Council, which covers both Molyneux and Phillips and Lower Bourryeau, is appointed by the Social Service Department under the Ministry of Education. Its function is to promote the social welfare of the community, although its meetings are very sporadic (held at the Molyneux clinic building) and many of the issues discussed are very small matters such as street sanitation and Christmas programs. Most of the members are selected from people who support the Labour Party, and most of the villagers are not even aware of its existence. The St. Kitts-Nevis Trades and Labour Union has its branch office in Molyneux (which covers Phillips, Mansion and Lower Bourryeau too) but its activity is restricted to a monthly meeting with very low attendance.

In short, since it came into existence, Molyneux village has become an increasingly important place for the commercial, educational and political activities of the people in the surrounding area.

C. Occupations and population

The growing decline of villagers' dependence upon the estates is

also reflected in the occupation of Molyneux's inhabitants. Only 57 out of 135 employed persons (42%) are engaged in estate work, while the remainder (58%) are employed in other areas such as white collar work, general business, and semi-skilled manual work (e.g. masons, carpenters, day labourers). The overwhelming bulk of non-estate employment occurs at Basseterre, with the exception of some teachers and shop keepers. In contrast, the people of Phillips are still predominantly employed by estates, i.e. 79 out of 103 employed people (77%), and while most of these work for the Molyneux and Mansion Estates there are growing numbers of workers who commute elsewhere, to the Cappesterre, Lodge and Hermitage Estates for example. Phillips is therefore still a plantation village, which is not the case for Molyneux. Furthermore, estate work predominates in every age category in Phillips, but this differs significantly from the pattern in Molyneux, especially for the 16 - 29 age group. Of the 51 Molyneux people in this category, only 8 (15%) are estate workers, while there are 23 (45%) non-estate manual or semi-skilled workers, 3 (7%) independent businessmen (shopkeepers) and 17 (33%) teachers and clerks. Thus the overwhelming majority (85%) of young people in Molyneux are engaged in non-estate work and most (78%) are wage earners. With regard to other age categories, Molyneux is again different from Phillips, as this table shows:

Table 8.1

Occupation of Molyneux and Phillips Inhabitants 1969

<u>Age group</u>	<u>Estate work</u>		<u>Non-estate work</u>	
	<u>Molyneux</u>	<u>Phillips</u>	<u>Molyneux</u>	<u>Phillips</u>
16 - 29	8	14	43	13
30 - 45	13	17	14	5
46 - 60	19	31	17	4
over 60	17	17	4	2
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	57	57	78	24

Their increasing independence from the estates as a means of livelihood is further indicated by the growth of emigration and the increasing dependence of those who remain upon remittances from abroad (which were discussed in Chapter Seven). After the devaluation of the British pound in November 1967, relatives abroad sent home more food and clothing than money, as they felt that prices on these items had increased so rapidly in St. Kitts. Some merchants took advantage of the devaluation of Eastern Caribbean currency, and doubled their prices on some food items. This eventually led the Government to control the prices of selected basic foodstuffs.

With regard to the present population composition and family structure in these villages (see Chapter Two for information regarding the island's population trends as a whole), Tables 8.2 and 8.3 demonstrate that emigration has mainly affected the 16 - 45 year old age group, that is, the bulk of the working age population (especially those between 30 and 45, of which there are more emigrants than residents). This is the age group mostly engaged in manual construction in St. Thomas or St. Croix; the majority of these people have a superior education and are therefore engaged in more diverse occupations, such as teachers, civil servants, clerks and semi-skilled trades (see Tables 8.4 and 8.5). A significant number of working age people have emigrated, especially to the United Kingdom and the U. S. Virgin Islands. One reason for this is that estate workers have always received very low wages, due to the abundance of labour in St. Kitts. In the past, many members of one household had to work for an estate in order for the unit to survive, but the technological displacement of workers has broken this pattern, with emigration being the main alternative. Both Molyneux and Phillips are estate vil-

Table 8.2 Phillips Village: Population Composition and Emigration 1969

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number resident</u>	<u>% of population</u>	<u>Number abroad</u>	<u>% of population</u>	<u>Total number</u>	<u>% of population</u>
Below 15	161	37.97	1	0.24	162	38.21
16 - 29	48	11.32	41	9.67	89	20.99
30 - 45	33	7.78	48	11.32	81	19.10
46 - 59	43	10.14	6	1.42	49	11.56
60 and over	43	10.14	0	0	43	10.14
Total:	328	77.35	96	22.65	424	100.00

Table 8.3 Molyneux Village: Population Composition and Emigration 1969

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number resident</u>	<u>% of population</u>	<u>Number abroad</u>	<u>% of population</u>	<u>Total number</u>	<u>% of population</u>
Below 15	374	42.69	9	1.03	383	43.72
16 - 29	93	10.61	88	10.05	181	20.66
30 - 45	54	6.16	118	13.47	172	19.63
46 - 59	71	8.11	10	1.14	81	9.25
Over 60	59	6.74	0	0	59	6.74
Total:	651	74.3	225	25.69	876	100.00

Table 8.4 Phillips: Occupation Composition and Age Distributions

<u>Occupations</u>	<u>16-29</u>	<u>30-45</u>	<u>46-60</u>	<u>over 60</u>	<u>Total</u>
Estate workers	14	17	31	17	79
Non-estate manual and semi-skilled (e.g. carpenters, factory workers, domestics)	9	1	1	1	12
Independent business (shop keepers, taxi drivers, craftsmen)	1	2	3	1	7
Salaried workers (teachers, civil servants, clerks)	3	2	0	0	5
Total:	27	22	35	19	103

Table 8.5 Molyneux: Occupation Composition and Age Distributions

<u>Occupations</u>	<u>16-29</u>	<u>30-45</u>	<u>46-60</u>	<u>over 60</u>	<u>Total</u>
Estate workers	8	13	19	17	57
Non-estate manual and semi-skilled (e.g. carpenters, factory workers, domestics)	23	3	4	1	31
Independent business (shop keepers, taxi drivers, craftsmen)	3	7	8	2	20
Salaried workers (teachers, civil servants, clerks)	17	4	5	1	27
Total:	51	27	36	21	135

lages, but of the two Phillips retains more estate workers in spite of its smaller number of household units. Yet there is an unmistakable trend towards emigration even in Phillips, when the 16-45's and the over 45's are compared:

Table 8.6

<u>Relationship between Emigration and Age</u>			
<u>Residence</u>	<u>16-45</u>	<u>Over 45</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Molyneux:</u> Home	147	130	277
Abroad	206	10	216
Total	353	140	493
<u>Phillips:</u> Home	81	86	167
Abroad	89	6	95
Total	170	92	262

In short, emigration has affected the age structure and changed the size and character of the labour force. The traditional estate workers (i.e. the 30-45 age group) are especially affected by emigration due to technological change in the St. Kitts plantation system.

Table 8.7

1969 Population and Age Distribution in Molyneux and Phillips

	<u>Molyneux</u>		<u>Phillips</u>	
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Under 16	165	162	75	76
16 - 30	78	78	56	64
31 - 45	24	38	29	33
46 - 60	59	62	30	28
over 60	18	29	15	15
Total:	344	369	205	215

D. Household composition

In his study of Nevis household production, Frucht (1966) utilized a household classification based upon relationships between generations in order to demonstrate the effect of emigration upon household composi-

tion. This scheme has been used in this study of Molyneux and Phillips in order to demonstrate the following:

(a) the increasing independence of the households from the estates as their only source of income;

(b) the increasing tendency toward dependence of single-member households upon estates as a source of income; (both these indicate that in spite of increasing labour productivity the income from estate work is insufficient to support the larger family, with consequent reduction of family size)

(c) that increasing numbers of estate workers are old people and the young members of households do not participate in estate work (this is indicative of the estates' attrition policy in recent years); and

(d) that people in the 30-45 age group are conspicuously absent from the households, due to heavy emigration (this being indicative of how former estate workers of this age group have been forced to emigrate under the impact of mechanization).

The Single Generation household is composed of mostly older men who are cane cutters, many of whom have illegitimate children, some having been thrown out of their marital homes for personal reasons. In most of these cases the houses belong to the women. There are growing numbers of women living alone and supported by their children living abroad.

Households in the Two Adjacent Generations category include the nuclear family and what Edith Clarke (1957) refers to as the "denuded" family. Nuclear family households include a man, woman and children by both and/or either one of them. Many of these households are based on legal marriage, the male usually is the head of the household, and the parents are generally either young or middle aged. The denuded households

are comprised of those who are left when a mate has emigrated, or one of a couple who has separated (often a result of a series of extra-residential relationships) together with the children. The father-child households are usually a result of either bereavement or the emigration of the female partner, often following one of her older children abroad who has established a household where she can care for her grandchildren.

None of the Three Adjacent Generations households in these villages are extended families, and there are no cases of two or more nuclear families living together. Households in this category are generally composed of a man and/or woman living alone or together, and his or her unmarried children of which some have children of their own.

Two Alternate Generations households are the result of emigration. They seem to reflect both the estates' inability to support workers with large families and the extent of emigration. In this respect, Phillips is a more traditional estate village than Molyneux, with only 14% of the households in this category (i.e. with grandparents and grandchildren) while the corresponding figure for Molyneux is 31%. Conversely, Phillips has a much larger percentage of Single Generation households (47%) and a large number of old men, over 50% of whom are estate workers.

At present the bulk of Molyneux and Phillips households are in the Single Generation category, followed in frequency of occurrence by the Two Adjacent Generations households. These two categories of household comprise over 53% (84 out of 156) in Molyneux and over 82% (80 out of 97) in Phillips (see Tables 8.8 and 8.9). Having been an estate village, Phillips presents an even more striking picture of the predominance of the Single Generation household (almost 50% of the whole village) with very small numbers of Three Adjacent Generations and Two Alternate

Table 8.8

Phillips: Present Household Composition

	Number of households	% of households	No. of members	Average size of house.
<u>Single Generation:</u>	46	47.43	54	1.17
Single person:	27	27.84	27	1
(male)	11	11.34	11	1
(female)				
Mating couple	8	8.25	16	2
<u>Two Adjacent Generations:</u>	34	35.05	174	5.12
Nuclear family	21	21.65	113	5.38
Denuded family:				
Mother & children	11	11.34	54	4.91
Father & children	2	2.06	7	3.50
<u>Three Adjacent Generations:</u>	6	6.18	50	8.33
Mother, father, child and grandchildren	4	4.12	37	9.25
Mother, child and grandchild.	2	2.06	13	6.50
Father, child and grandchild.				
<u>Two Alternate Generations:</u>	8	8.25	43	5.38
Grandmother, grandfather, and grandchildren	1	1.03	11	11.0
Grandmother and grandchildren	7	7.22	32	4.57
Miscellaneous	3	3.09	7	2.50
 TOTAL:	 98	 100%	 328	 4.50

Table 8.9

Molyneux: Present Household Composition

	<u>No. of households</u>	<u>% of households</u>	<u>No. of members</u>	<u>Average size of househ.</u>
<u>Single Generation:</u>	43	27.56	52	1.21
Single person:				
(male)	22	14.10	22	1
(female)	12	7.69	12	1
Mating couple	9	5.77	18	2
<u>Two Adjacent Generations:</u>	41	26.27	214	5.22
Nuclear family	24	15.38	142	5.92
Denuded family:				
Mother and children	13	8.33	61	4.69
Father and children	4	2.56	11	2.75
<u>Three Adjacent Generations:</u>	28	17.94	187	6.60
Mother, father, child. and grandchildren	11	7.05	95	8.64
Mother, children and grandchildren	14	8.97	75	5.36
Father, children and grandchildren	3	1.92	17	5.67
<u>Two Alternate Generations:</u>	21	13.47	109	5.19
Grandmother, Grandfather and grandchildren	5	3.21	36	7.20
Grandmother and grandchildren	16	10.26	73	4.56
Miscellaneous:	23	14.74	109	4.74
	—	—	—	—
TOTAL:	156	99.98	671	4.61

Generations households compared to Molyneux. Out of a total of 97 households, only 57 (58.8%) Phillips households are dependent upon the estate as a source of income as compared to 65 out of 156 (41.7%) Molyneux households:

Table 8.10

Household Income Sources in Phillips and Molyneux

<u>Source of Income</u>	<u>Single Generation Households</u>	<u>Two Adjacent Generation Households</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>PHILLIPS:</u>				
Estate only	21	10	0	31
Estate & other	6	13	7	26
	—	—	—	—
Total	27	23	7	57
	—	—	—	—
<u>MOLYNEUX:</u>				
Estate only	13	3	0	18
Estate & other	5	17	24	46
	—	—	—	—
Total	18	22	24	64

The estate workers' households closely reflect the general picture of both villages in so far as the Single Generation and Two Alternate Generations categories are concerned, but estate workers' families have a larger proportion of Two Adjacent Generations and Three Adjacent Generations households than other villagers do. The complete dependence of estate workers upon the estates for income is highest among the Single Generation households, followed by the Two Adjacent Generations households, both in Phillips and Molyneux. Furthermore, there are no estate workers' households belonging to the Three Adjacent Generations and Two Alternate Generations categories which depend upon income solely from the estate; other sources of income are always necessary to maintain their livelihood. In short, there is a direct proportion between the size of

the household and its source of income. Even among the estate employees Two Adjacent Generations households with an average of over five people, there are eight families in Molyneux and Phillips receiving tractor driver wages which tend to be relatively high, while the remaining seven families have two or more members who work for the estate, often a man and a woman, or a mother and son.

In conclusion, estate wages seem to support most of the small-sized, often Single Generation households (see Tables 8.11 and 8.12) while larger ones need two or more members working for the estate, or some other source of income such as remittances from abroad. On the one hand, the number of households in both villages which depend for their income upon the estate has declined in recent years, but the size of households able to live on estate incomes alone has also declined, which may be one result of the recent mechanization on estates which was discussed in Chapter Five.

E. Interpersonal relations

The changes described in the foregoing have affected interpersonal relations in the villages, as well as those between estate workers and management. Most of the former are wretched and lonely people who spend their after-working hours quietly among themselves on street corners, sharing little conversation other than arguments, and mostly occupied in watching children or other people. For this reason it is very difficult to initiate conversation with them. Sharing cigarettes or rum with them can in many ways be a painful experience; rum sends their spirits up but they subsequently become highly unpredictable, with frequent feuds among themselves. Their wretched situation reflects the estates' attrition policy. Rather than recruiting young workers with higher pay when the sugar industry was mechanized, the estates decided to keep their prime

Table 8.11

Phillips: Estate Workers' Household Composition

	<u>No. of households</u>	<u>% of households</u>	<u>No. of members</u>	<u>Average size of househ.</u>
<u>Single Generation:</u>	26	45.81	32	1.23
Single person:				
(male)	18	31.58	18	1
(female)	2	3.70	2	1
Mating couple	6	10.53	12	2
<u>Two Adjacent Generations:</u>	23	40.54	126	5.48
Nuclear family	14	24.56	75	5.36
Denuded family:				
Mother and children	7	12.28	44	6.48
Father and children	2	3.70	7	3.80
<u>Three Adjacent Generations:</u>	5	8.96	40	8
Mother, father, children and grandchildren	3	5.26	27	9
Mother, children and grandchildren	2	3.70	13	6.50
Father, children and grandchildren				
<u>Two Alternate Generations:</u>	2	3.50	15	7.50
Grandmother, grandfather and grandchildren	1	1.75	11	11
Grandmother and grandchildren	1	1.75	4	4
Miscellaneous:	1	1.75	2	2
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL:	57	100%	215	4.84

Table 8.12

Molyneux: Estate Workers' Household Composition

	<u>No. of households</u>	<u>% of households</u>	<u>No. of members</u>	<u>Average size of househ.</u>
<u>Single Generation:</u>	18	28.13	21	1.17
Single person:				
(male)	11	17.19	11	1
(female)	4	6.25	4	1
Mating couple	3	4.69	6	2
<u>Two Adjacent Generations:</u>	22	34.38	110	5
Nuclear family	17	26.56	92	5.41
Denuded family:				
Mother and children	3	4.69	12	4
Father and children	2	3.13	6	3
<u>Three Adjacent Generations:</u>	9	14.07	69	7.67
Mother, father, children and grandchildren	4	6.25	40	10
Mother, children and grandchildren	3	4.69	17	5.67
Father, children and grandchildren	2	3.13	12	6
<u>Two Alternate Generations:</u>	9	14.06	52	5.78
Grandmother, grandfather and grandchildren	4	6.25	29	7.25
Grandmother and grandchildren	5	7.81	23	4.60
Miscellaneous:	6	9.38	30	5
	—	—	—	—
TOTAL:	64	100%	282	4.92

workers, men who were in their mid-30's and 40's at that time. These men form the majority of estate workers now, and are all around 50 or 60 years old. Many of them are alone in the world. They were extremely disappointed when they discovered soon after my arrival that I was not a doctor of medicine (they were expecting a replacement for the Chinese doctor who had been studying in Edinburgh). As a whole, they do not get along with the younger estate workers, due mainly to the fact that the latter usually work on the tractors (either as drivers or brakesmen), and often consider the old ones "stupid"; they do not associate with each other either at work or after hours. In fact, many times villagers like to provoke these older workers and to poke fun at them, especially at those of them who try to drown their miseries in liquor.

Relations between the estate owners or managers and workers continue to be characterized by the paternalism of the old plantation system, in spite of the industry's post-1912 structural changes. The older estate workers feel ambivalent. On the one hand, their dependency relationship with the managers entails more than their wages, but on the other they feel deeply suspicious that the long years of arduous labour on the estates have not improved their lot, and might in fact underlie their own deterioration. Workers stated several times "work is hard and no money", and "St. Kitts is beautiful but no money for us". One worker stated that "life is hard for the older workers and the situation is getting worse". When asked why this was so, especially in view of the fact that he was listening to a transistor radio and wearing smart two-tone shoes, he stated that people all around him had far more than him, and he was also less happy than in the old days when he did not have such things. People used to "have more fun together" than they did now. He stated simply

that he had no-one to take care of him when sick. Another worker told me reluctantly that he felt ashamed because he could not support his family. He had worked for one estate ever since he was twelve years old (for over forty years) yet could not send his children to school because they had no suitable clothes or shoes. The majority of workers do not like to talk about their family situations because it brings out their "failures" as husbands and fathers. In fact, many of the older single workers' wives have left them and gone away to work, or even to reside alone in the same village. Such workers as these present quite a different picture of themselves when met at their workplace - in the cane fields. They are very proud of their work, and often scoff at the people who "make an easy living" (mostly non-estate workers). When asked how to operate the machete, they are very glad to demonstrate and to explain in detail what one must or must not do in cutting sugar cane. They explain that the most important aspect is usually how to conserve energy in order to avoid the dangers of physical exhaustion, and how not to get hurt, especially from cane leaves on the eyes and skin.

The workers tend to be rather hostile towards managers and overseers during work time, trying to ignore them on their rounds, hoping they will be left alone. At other times they will complain bitterly to them about their working conditions. Disputes usually involve the failure of other workers (especially tractor drivers and loader operators) to pick up their cane in favour of someone else's, or not picking it up properly and loosing part of their work. Managers would usually try to listen, but often would either do nothing, or do whatever would produce minimal satisfaction in the workers. This response is typical of their whole relationship. If workers do not complain, managers and overseers

try to converse with them in a joking fashion, usually by poking fun at them and calling them by nicknames. The workers respond in a rather playful fashion, with what Wolf and Mintz (1958) call "childlike" behaviour, calling out "yes, Baas" or "no, Baas". In this pattern of colonial paternalism, neither side respects the other. The workers simply humour the managers by responding to their provocation with childlike behaviour, thus avoiding the tense atmosphere or unpleasant tasks which might otherwise result. At the same time, they satisfy the managers' desire for superiority, but after the managers leave workers usually laugh at them and imitate certain aspects of their behaviour.

Workers are usually indebted to the manager, not only financially but in many other respects. For example, workers must still obtain notes from him before being permitted to visit the doctor if sick or injured during working hours. Quite often workers have to request an advance on their wages or a loan from the "boss". Many workers (especially in Philips) still reside on a house spot or in a house belonging to the estate, and therefore not only have to pay the rent but also have to depend upon the manager's favours to do repairs, etc. But many older cane cutters maintain a little independence by cultivating root crops on estate bush land for their own subsistence needs.

The most often heard complaints by managers are of "bad labour relations" and the increasingly "disrespectful" behaviour of the workers. The former refers to the overseers' inability to raise labour productivity high enough to meet the daily cane delivery quota. They complain that disputes in the field are usually referred to the overseers, thus wasting time and money which should be spent on supervising the work and making sure it is done. Moreover, there is the rising frequency of ab-

senteism. This is rather high among older workers simply because many of them are increasingly less capable of working, especially of cutting cane for 5½ days a week. As already noted, there is no financial or experiential incentive to work, no higher grade or wage promotion to reward experience. Since the work itself is debilitating, workers simply do not work beyond the necessary. The higher degree of coordination required by the centralization of the sugar industry is therefore not met, and sugar production has declined in recent years. This has resulted in workers having to go further into debt with their "boss" to make a living. The further this happens, the less incentive there is to work, as the pay cheque will then be insufficient for his needs and his debts. Often managers deduct \$5 or \$10 from a weekly pay cheque of \$20 or \$25. In 1969, one estate had to write off over \$6,000 as uncollectable debt from its workers. Managers have to make these loans in order to maintain the ever decreasing numbers of workers at their disposal.

Against this background, one overseer complained that he did not wish to settle workers' disputes in the first place, because his pay in comparison with the manager's was insufficient. Moreover, he was a family man and was afraid that one of the workers would "harm" his family if he did not settle a dispute to everyone's satisfaction. Furthermore, he blamed the "bad labour relations" upon the managers. He felt that instead of disciplining the workers when absent without sickness (he claimed that the most usual cause of this was gambling or drinking in the village) they should be denied loans, and would therefore be unable to pursue such activities. When asked whether he was aware of the fact that the manager was just as worried as him about his family situation, he replied "What the hell is becoming of this country?" Both owners and managers often display anger in the face of what they call "disrespect" by workers. This

often involves not obeying their wishes, or displaying a hostile attitude rather than behaving in a subdued, docile manner. They regard both the hostility and any egalitarianism as disrespect. Workers often use the former as a last resort when trying to get favours from the manager. For example, if a worker should ask why he got a smaller pay cheque one week, the owner or manager would claim that the worker showed disrespect by questioning his integrity. This problem arose every week in one estate during the period of field work. During the harvest season, workers often found themselves in a situation where they felt that they were not fully paid and requested an explanation; owners and managers find this experience very unpleasant and usually try to avoid it by keeping out of the way on pay day.

Not surprisingly, the owners and managers blame "bad labour relations" entirely upon Union politics and Government leaders who are also in the Union. However, the Union's strength among estate workers is not as great as it used to be. Relationships under the old plantation system prevented any strong organized Union activity on the estates, and even now one estate manager told me that he had no trouble with the Union since only five of his workers were members. He appeared to be correct, as investigation showed that there were less than a dozen members from Mansion, Lower Bourryeau, Phillips and Molyneux usually attending the Union's local chapter meetings. However, there were over sixty due-paying members on this estate who did not attend meetings. The five who declare their membership openly are claimed by the manager to be "trouble makers". Some of the silent members explained that their membership is secret because they wished to avoid being shortchanged by the management. They had all been open members during the 1940's when the Union itself was strong, but

since then many people had lost their jobs with mechanization and other changes, and it had become prudent to keep silent. One worker who had rescinded his membership said he did not see the need to belong to the Union, since non-members got the same wages as did members (the Union representative accused this worker of supporting the opposition party, although no-one else claimed this). When reminded that present wage rates and the annual increase had been achieved by the Union Leaders' collective bargaining on behalf of all workers, this individual retorted "We have not made enough and workers are in hardship. The leaders do not spend enough time with the workers like the old days, but most of the time they are at Basseterre or out of the country and only at election time do they come around for our support". At present, Labour Union activity is rather weak at the local level, and total membership has declined in recent years.

The petite bourgeoisie is a small but important segment of the village scene, and is composed of black people who are mainly teachers, lower echelon civil servants, and store clerks (who commute to Basseterre daily) and of village merchants. Relationships between the workers and the first two of these occupational categories are usually minimal, partly due to the latter's lower ages and greater degrees of education, but principally because there is no day-to-day opportunity for contact between them. Workers do not feel comfortable with them (especially where the teachers are concerned) and do not usually engage in conversation with them. On the other side of the coin, both teachers and civil servants tend to look down upon the workers; one often hears such statements as "cutters are stupid people".

However, the relationship between local merchants and workers is more complex, due to their day-to-day buying and selling interchanges.

The workers are usually very timid with the merchants* who in their turn would be very reserved, in a relationship similar to those between citizens and bureaucrats or managers and workers. The merchants have a patronising air about them, while the workers themselves would play the role of asking favours. The binding mechanism of this class relationship is usually a financial one. Workers usually purchase their daily subsistence requirements on a credit basis; part of this debt is usually paid off on pay days. It was not possible to find out how far workers are indebted to the merchants. The limit of credit extended seems to vary from store to store and workers would often have credit arrangements with more than one of them, even when they sell similar merchandise. One newer store, operated by a young man, tends to give less credit and to trade on the basis of "cash and carry". His prices are lower than those of the credit-based stores. For this reason most of the petite bourgeoisie trades at this store, as do the tractor drivers and some other workers when they have the necessary cash (which is not often). On one occasion there was a dispute between one worker and the woman who owned one of the old stores. He was complaining about the higher price of one item in comparison to the new store's price; the owner was very upset and interpreted the complaint as "ungrateful" and "disrespectful", as she had provided him with so many years of credit services. She complained bitterly that workers often fail to pay their bills, move away, and she never collects the money. The argument continued along these lines for one hour, until both parties were tired of shouting. She explained later that credits are too extensive and too much of it is uncollectable, although she had operated

* There are no estate operated stores in St. Kitts villages, although the two Agency companies in Basseterre function as island-wide company stores. (In the late 19th Century, a Portuguese merchant, Farara, operated rum shops throughout the island, and from the gains bought the Sir Gillies and Pond & Needsmost Estates).

on this basis all her life. She felt she had to operate as people expected her to, but this meant raising prices to protect her income. If she operated at lower prices and on a cash-and-carry basis, she felt she would soon be out of business. Anyway, she was selling all small items such as coke, soda, and beer on a basis of cash already, and only allowed credit on such basic items as rice, flour, cooking oil and salted fish. The following morning the worker who had been arguing with her was back at the store trying to "make up" for the previous day, again buying on credit. The owner said that this happened all the time, indicating the dependent nature of this relationship.

The national bourgeoisie are not involved in village social life since they reside mainly in the capital city.

F. Conclusion

In spite of rapid changes over the years in the organization of production, the villages of Molyneux and Phillips still reflect the classical colonial social structure to the extent that changes are forced upon the community and there is only a minimal development of social institutions in the community itself capable of dealing with these challenges. In the past, workers' minimal social needs were provided for by the old plantation system, and even now workers depend upon the estates for wages and for such things as mountain land upon which to grow subsistence provisions, health care and death benefits (providing coffins, gifts, etc.). Many Phillips residents occupy house-spots belonging to the Molyneux Estate, and the majority of present and former workers are heavily indebted to the estates, which therefore operate as quasi-lending institutions. The community as a whole still depends on the estate for numerous miscellaneous benefits. For example, one estate provides an annual donation to

three different churches. When a travelling movie comes to the village it is usually shown at one of the estate's machine storage sheds. Sometimes estate tractors will clear the garbage dump or fix the road, and the water supply comes from estate land.

It will be apparent from the descriptions of village life and social relationships given in this chapter that there has been a two-way interaction between the sugar industry and community life. Technological and organizational changes in the industry initiated a series of changes in village life, particularly among the working class, which reduced their dependence upon the estates, and thereby also reduced the industry's age-old monopsonistic advantages. However, large elements of that old dependence do remain, especially in old villages such as Phillips.

PART FOUR

In Part Four, I will examine the viability of the plantation system as a method of organizing production in a new nation state, and I will compare the Wolf-Mintz model of the plantation with the evolution of the St. Kitts plantation system.

My central argument is that the St. Kitts sugar plantation has been from its inception to the present an integral part of the economic and political expansion of European capitalism. Dependency extended from the economic to the social-political spheres and became total. At each step, there was heightened class antagonism between the European capitalists and the people of St. Kitts. In short, unlike the "hacienda" type which emerged in response to a more or less local need, the "plantation type emerged as part of world capitalism and its concomitant need for empire building.

CHAPTER NINE

PLANTATION AND NATION STATE

A. The plantation system as a non-viable organization of production in a new nation state

(1) Economic problems. At present the modern plantation system in St. Kitts is rapidly coming to an end, and the search for a viable alternative economic and social system is one of the major problems that preoccupies many Kittitians. Young Labour's demand for nationalization of the sugar industry, and their ideological blueprint for a viable future society based on Socialism, Black Power and Revolution, is an example of this concern. The increasing demand by the opposition party PAM that St. Kitts develop large scale tourism is another. Even though the proposals of the two main political parties are different, they spring from the same set of problems, whose solution seems to involve two conflicting demands. On the one hand, the rapid decline of the sugar industry apparently needs to be arrested; on the other, resources need to be diverted away from the concentration on sugar towards other areas of the economy. This problem has been reflected in the policies of the present Government. The Five Year Social and Economic Development Plan, which started in 1969, places its major emphasis on the development of large scale tourism (over seven hundred hotel rooms, a marine port, etc.), whereas the Sugar Industry Advisory Board Act which was passed in July 1970 was a first step toward some form of nationalization of the sugar industry. These two measures are very significant, and could have far-reaching consequences, but they must be examined within a historical perspective.

Large scale tourism would provide immediate jobs for many Kittitians, especially in construction areas, and would bring in the foreign exchange needed to offset the declining revenue from sugar exports. It is, nevertheless, important to recognize that this project has limited advantages for the overall social and economic development of St. Kitts in the future. In the first place, foreign exchange earnings would be very limited, as is already the case in those West Indian islands where extensive tourism projects have been undertaken. One report stated that the tourist dollar has the least elasticity in stimulating the economy, as over 95% of each \$1 earned goes abroad (Zinder Report, 1969). It has become evident that investment in tourism does not usually bring about the economic and social development desired by the hosting countries. Pioneer industries (including tourism) come from metropolitan centres to developing areas for only two reasons; to evade corporate taxation at home (hosting countries give tax concessions for five to fifteen years) and to exploit the cheap labour force that is available. Such investments as these do not reflect the host countries' economic development requirements. In fact, they are usually quite irrelevant to the host economies. For example, a Texas electronic company established a factory in St. Kitts to build electronic components for television, the entire production being geared for export to the United States (there is not even any television service in St. Kitts yet). In order to attract such foreign investment as this, the host countries have to allow a free flow of capital and provide some form of guarantee that the investment will not be expropriated in the future. This creates economic adversity for the host country, and eventually results in the outflow of more profits to the metropolitan country rather than a

capital inflow, in the same way as is presently occurring with the St. Kitts sugar factory. In short, it is not likely that such developments as these will solve the economic problem of creating either a labour or a commodity market in St. Kitts itself.

As noted in Chapter Seven, the social and political consequences are even more serious. Black people come to be overwhelmingly engaged in service occupations for the white tourists or executives, or in the extensive development of the quick money-making "hustling" businesses of prostitution, gambling and underworld business for white people. (For example, the taxi drivers at Antigua airport wait for airplanes to land and then swarm around tourists for business in a manner reminiscent of children in war-torn countries who fight on the ground for candy thrown about by G.I.'s) There is a simple substitution; North American masters instead of the traditional British ones. Moreover, employment in tourism has the limitation of being seasonal, but even when it is in full swing white tourists have a degenerating effect. They appear to want to do things they cannot do readily at home, and their behaviour can consequently be described as obnoxious, frequently involving attempts to show off their presumed cultural superiority. People in the host countries often try to imitate this pattern. For example, the Trinidad February Carnival does not represent Trinidadian culture, but is more an imitation of distorted Hollywood grandiose orgies designed to attract tourist dollars. This kind of development seemed to underlay the Trinidad Revolution of 1970, where many young people rejected their Government's activities on the grounds that they were seriously compromising the people's desire to build a country free and independent from the colonial and capitalist structure. The people of St. Kitts, labour, and

Government leaders are all aware of this, and intend to control tourism in their country by Government involvement in the tourist infra-structure. It is not clear how they can protect themselves against the massive weight of metropolitan concerns. Even if this were possible, the amount of money invested by the Government under the Five Year Plan seems to be too large an investment for such a limited project. In order to attract North American monopoly capital, St. Kitts apparently has to spend over \$60 m., which the island cannot afford since other urgent problems require the scarce funds and efforts involved.

One example of these urgent problems concerns agricultural diversification and the development of a domestic market. So far, the Government's agricultural settlement scheme has not worked at all, having been neither well-planned nor carried out in a vigorous manner. In fact, the present Government took the scheme over from the colonial administration and it had not been originated with any intention of diversifying the economy. Under the Five Year Plan, agricultural diversification is planned to reduce by substitution the heavy dependence upon imported food (which is the single largest imported item), but this sector receives insufficient funds to meet its goals (a little over \$1 m.) which compares most unfavourably with allocations for tourist infra-structure development. These allocations do not seem to reflect the fundamental importance for St. Kitts to reorganize and expand the agricultural diversification program on an island-wide basis, both to produce essential foods and to develop a viable alternative to the colonial-capitalist social-economic basis of the plantation system economy.

(2) Organization of production. In St. Kitts, unlike some other West Indian sugar producing areas (such as Trinidad, Jamaica, Guyana and

Barbados), no peasant class developed after Emancipation in 1834. It can therefore be argued that to dismantle the sugar industry entirely and to concentrate upon developing agriculture as an alternative (as proposed by some West Indian economists) is not applicable to the St. Kitts case (Beckford, 1970; Best, 1969). Furthermore, the modern sugar industry is not accompanied by any independent production by small farmers as is the case in Hawaii, for example, where farmers grow their own cash food crops and some cane, with the possibility of varying their production whenever the need should arise. Some sugar cane is grown by private individuals on the Saddlers and Fahies Estates in St. Kitts, where land which was set aside but not used under the Government diversification project is available. But on the whole Kittitians do not have access to land for these purposes, since the island has been entirely dependent upon the sugar industry in the past. Even where mechanization has led to certain areas being taken out of cane production, the pattern of land ownership has prevented Kittitians from growing other crops, and the land remains idle. At a time of uncertainty due to the British entry into the Common Market, and declining sugar production and exports, the need for a reduction in St. Kitts traditional dependence upon the sugar industry and imported food supplies is urgent, yet insufficient manpower, energy and resources are available to organize the appropriate changes.

To divert the use of land towards food production is not as difficult in St. Kitts as it is in some other sugar producing areas, especially where there is what Julian Steward (1956) called a "corporate Plantation System" where factory and field are jointly owned, often by large corporations, as is the case in Puerto Rico and Hawaii (Mollett, 1965).

As noted in Chapters Four and Five, while ownership of the factory in St. Kitts is British, estate ownership is overwhelmingly local, and there is consequently no likelihood of direct British intervention in the diversification of land use from cane to food production. Moreover, as long as any such scheme were not "revolutionary", estate owners could probably be counted upon to cooperate in this effort, since it would enable them to maintain their present economic position. The main requirement in this respect would be, on the one hand, the application of greater efforts and technological facilities in the agricultural sector, and on the other hand the provision of marketing facilities, price support and research. A further prerequisite to the strengthening of the St. Kitts economy is a reorganization of the sugar industry itself* in order to raise the workers' standard of living and to diversify its production (sugar has numerous applications, ranging through rum, candy, synthetic fibres, rubbers, plastics, and medicines. The industry could also process other products of the agro-industry such as fruit).

The role of the workers has always been a major aspect of the economic development of the St. Kitts industry, as this thesis has shown. In the first place, it has always been the St. Kitts workers upon whom the sugar industry depended for its functioning and for its wealth, even though the workers themselves became impoverished under the plantation mode of production. In so far as the disappearance of this exploitation

* There must be some kind of organization, e.g. a public corporation, to manage the entire sugar industry and to be controlled by the workers and other participants in the sugar industry. The Government should not engage in direct management, but should provide the necessary services in the areas of finance, technology, and marketing, in order to secure the future of the industry. Nor should the Government tax this industry, in return for which the industry would place the utmost priority on raising the standard of its workers' welfare.

is deemed desirable by the workers, it would be necessary for the strengthening of the sugar industry to avoid social upheavals by granting these workers a legitimate major political role in shaping the industry's future* and by raising their living standards. As noted throughout this thesis, workers live under conditions of poverty, especially in the estates sector, and in spite of their great contribution to the economy they experience many failures in their daily lives and are likely to achieve their ends by revolt unless given a chance to control their own destiny. Moreover, the economy as a whole would benefit from workers' improved living standards, as other sectors of the economy would be stimulated (especially consumer goods, and eventually capital goods) leading to the development of a domestic market system and helping to redirect industrial effort towards the needs of Kittitians rather than of outside investors. (Only then would it be timely for the Government to tax both the industrial and agricultural sectors without danger of over-burdening them, thus providing a surplus to fill other social needs on the island.) In this respect, the nationalization of the sugar industry could be beneficial if it met in a tangible way the desires and needs of the workers on a priority basis rather than being undertaken merely to increase Government revenue. It is relevant to note here that those presently working in the industry are held in very low esteem, not only by the young, but also the old, because of the historical connection with sla-

* A major appropriate political goal would be the abolition of the class structure which is now based upon a separation of the workers from their means of production, with artificially low wages being maintained through naked and structural coercion. It is not therefore enough to abolish private land ownership and replace it with Government ownership, as this merely changes the agent dominating the workers. The social division of labour must also end, and workers must be able to control the instruments of their own labour and to decide their own productive roles in relation to other groups.

very and exploitation. For this reason, if nationalization involved a taking over of management by a Government bureaucracy, it might lead to a situation detrimental to both workers and Government, putting a great strain on the relations between them (as happened between Polish workers and their leaders in 1971).

In so far as nationalization, agricultural diversification and tourism could provide for real improvement in the condition of the masses they would be an integral part of the struggle to become emancipated which the colonized people of St. Kitts began over three hundred years ago. Legal and political emancipation were the result of the development of social consciousness, which was in turn based upon their understanding of social reality, which they were led to discover through an exploitative relationship under capitalism, and the subsequent determination to break their enslavement. The development of social consciousness by the oppressed black people was the crucial element which was translated into social and political power, which in turn has been the key to understanding the transformation of St. Kitts society:

It is men who make their history, but not
in arbitrary fashion, not in conditions
chosen by themselves, but in conditions
directly given and inherited from the past.
(Marx, 1844)

To place events in a historical perspective, the people of St. Kitts can be seen as continuing into the economic sphere their decisive struggle against exploitation.

As a result of such extensive changes as those indicated here, the plantation system as we know it would of course no longer exist in either its economic or its social aspects. Such a prediction is not ungrounded in reality, and this thesis has shown that the plantation

system in St. Kitts is already passée as far as economic viability is concerned.

B. Re-examination of the Wolf-Mintz model

The Wolf-Mintz model of the plantation is not a dynamic one. It is based on one independent variable, the level of investment (capital) which is described as affecting in a mechanistic way more or less all the other (dependent) variables - market, technology, land use, labour use, and sanctions - in such a way that one is supposed to be able to predict either an "Hacienda" or a "Plantation" type of development (see Figure 8).

In order to test the usefulness of this model, one would have to vary the level of investment (independent variable) to see if changes do in fact occur in the dependent variables in such a way that

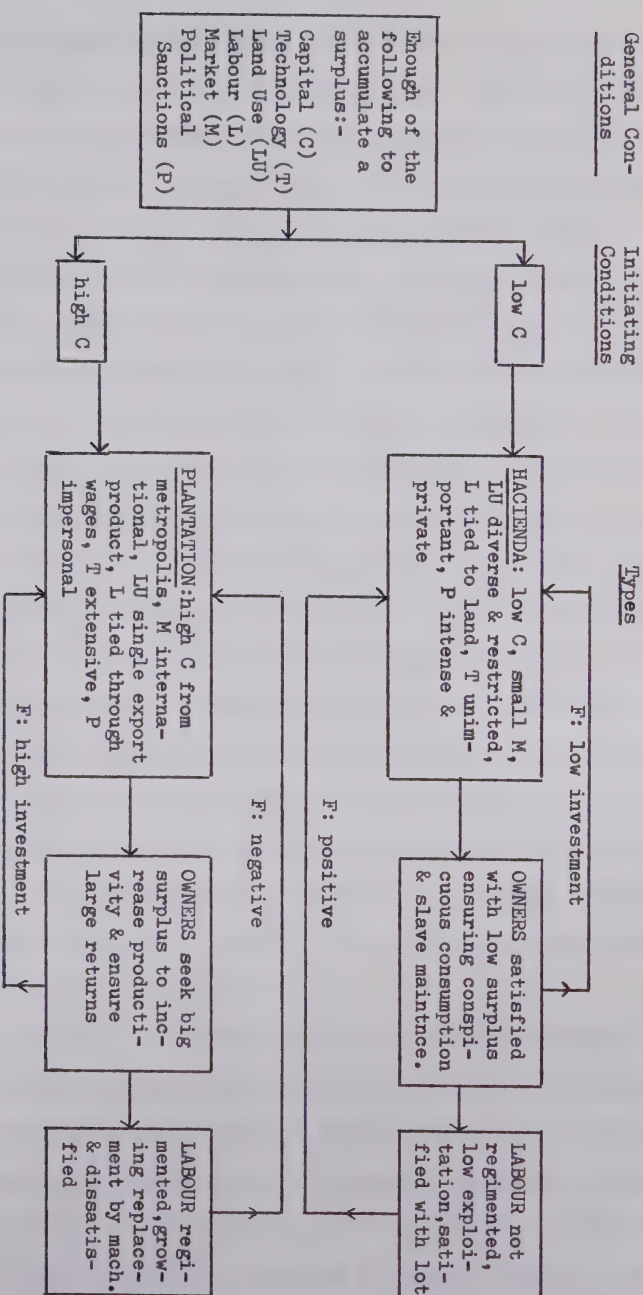
(a) if one increased the investment level from "low" to "high" the result would be a change from "Hacienda" to "Plantation" type, or

(b) if one reduced investment, the converse would be true.

The St. Kitts old plantation system (which had characteristics very similar to the "Hacienda" type) and its change to the modern plantation system (which is similar to the "Plantation" type) would provide a test of the changes predicted by the model. Changes in St. Kitts plantation system do not provide a means of testing whether reduced investment would lead to a change from the latter to the former.

The St. Kitts plantation system (through its slavery, old, and modern stages) has always relied upon the British market, while its own operations and market were both rather limited. Even today these conditions prevail, not so much due to the characteristics of the market itself, but rather to a more fundamental colonial relationship which has

FIGURE 8. The Wolf-Mintz Model



(F = feedback)

restricted the supply of St. Kitts sugar to the British market; there is no other reason why St. Kitts could not use a wider international market. This limited market was further conditioned by the fact of distance (affecting shipping costs, etc.), the level of technology, and the size of St. Kitts itself. In short, sugar production under the old plantation system of St. Kitts was small, supplying a limited market in a metropolitan country in the same way that some "Hacienda" types supply a semi-monopolized metropolitan market. However, the old plantation system differed from the "Hacienda" in that it developed out of a slave plantation system whose labour force was imported, as opposed to the use of a native labour force. There was no functional difference, as they both required the labour intensive organization of production made possible by a colonial situation with its distinct legal and racial forms of discrimination, and a supply of underprivileged workers tied to the land (i.e. "bound" labour). The dependent variables of the St. Kitts old plantation system (land use, technology, sanctions, labour use, and market) were therefore similar to those of the Wolf-Mintz "Hacienda" type, due to the feudal-like labour process and its relation to the means of production. Thus the change from old to modern plantation system in St. Kitts would be explained in the Wolf-Mintz model by a change from a "low" to a "high" level of investment.

This was not in fact the case. It was argued in Chapter Three that on the one hand increased productivity brought about competition and falling prices, and on the other hand the increased technological change aimed at reducing the cost of production in order to accumulate surplus, were both already evident during the second half of the 19th Century. It was therefore not the lack of investment per se which brought

about a crisis for the old plantation system; more importantly, the organisation of production was on too small a scale to compete with the larger sugar producing areas, and the investors consequently favoured the latter. Only with the development of the modern plantation system in St. Kitts was capital invested in the establishment of the centralized sugar factory. Investment capital which is metropolitan controlled (characteristic of the plantation mode of production) and its operation in hinterlands (colonial areas) is always available more or less proportionately to the surplus accumulation potential. The level of investment as an independent variable is therefore not a useful criterion of change from one type to another.

One of the major characteristics which distinguishes the "Plantation" type from the "Hacienda" (according to the Wolf-Mintz model) is the role of technology. They argue that a high level of profit-seeking investment in Plantation production constitutes an extensive utilization of technology rather than of labour (cf. Handler, 1965), as is the case in Hacienda production. This is because it is aimed at supplying a large market and developing a single export commodity economy. In other words, technology limits the diversification of land use, and as more technology is employed in the organization of production, there is a corresponding shift from production for "use value" to production solely for "exchange value". This explanation is to some extent applicable if one examines the capitalist mode of production in the metropolis, but it does not apply in the colonial situation. It was stated in Chapter Four that St. Kitts was already producing over 51,000 tons (in 1951) before the extensive modernization of production took place between 1953 and 1964, and that the purpose of these steps was not to increase

the total output (which would be pointless, since the 1951 Commonwealth Sugar Agreement guaranteed only 43,000 tons at Negotiated Prices and about 7,000 tons for local export), but rather was aimed at shortening the harvest season, replacing workers, improving the productivity and cutting the income of those who were employed - thus assuring the capitalists of large profits.

It was argued above that the capitalists took this avenue of maximizing profits (rather than directly cutting workers' wages, as was done throughout the second half of the 19th Century and the first half of the 20th) because of the increased power of organized labour in the form of the Union, which through a series of militant strikes effectively resisted any further attempts to cut wages. Moreover, the Labour movement was simultaneously transformed into a national struggle for independence from colonial rule. In a colonial-capitalist organization of production technology becomes significant only when it is no longer possible to otherwise exploit a cheap and abundant labour force. A high level of investment is not an invariable feature of the capitalist organization of production; why invest at all if large profits can be obtained continuously by merely exploiting labour? One of the roles of technology in the capitalist organization is therefore to create or to ensure the continuation of a cheap and abundant labour force. But as noted in Chapters Four and Five, modernization in St. Kitts did not have the result desired by investors because of the exploitative colonial situation and the immigration policies of the metropolitan power.

The other distinguishing characteristic of the Wolf-Mintz "Plantation" type is the use of a large international market compared to "Hacienda" conditions. This, of course, assumes that one reason for

high investment and the application of technology is market competition, which exerts an ever increasing demand upon the expansion of production and the improvement of efficiency, in order to reduce production costs and to realize larger profits through an improved competitive position. If one examines the example of St. Kitts, it is apparent that this principle did not play a major role. As mentioned earlier, sugar exports have been limited to the United Kingdom through the restricted and manipulative tariff system. The St. Kitts plantation system prospered under this scheme until the British embraced a free trade policy which caused the St. Kitts sugar industry to suffer. This was especially the case throughout the latter half of the 19th Century (see Chapter Three). St. Kitts colonial position and its particular organization of production made it quite impossible to compete in an international market. The principle embodied in the Wolf-Mintz model (i.e. that market competition causes a high investment or the application of modern technology) is therefore empirically false, as evidenced by the example of St. Kitts.

From the above analysis, it is clear that the characteristics of different plantation types are fundamentally conditioned by the colonial situation and the plantation mode of production, which is an artificial condition forced by the metropolitan capitalists to ensure an adequate and cheap labour force and the creation of a surplus. For this reason, although there is a difference in concentration, both the "Hacienda" and "Plantation" types characteristically specialize in the production of a single commodity with a high exchange value on the overseas market. Depending on the degree to which the colonies' production is exploited by incorporation into the metropolitan countries' economies, there emerges either the "Hacienda" or the "Plantation" type; the changing degree of

exploitation of the colonies can be seen to cause a change from one type to the other. This can be illustrated by the Puerto Rican example (Steward, et al, 1956). After this island had been incorporated into the United States on a colonial basis, the "Plantation" type emerged in those areas of the island which facilitated the transportation of commodities to the metropolitan market, namely along the coast. In those areas where United States capitalism did not penetrate (often hinterland) the "Hacienda" type which was developed by the Spanish still exists, although it is being increasingly incorporated into the United States economy through an exchange system (and thus will eventually disappear). Similar conditions exist throughout Central and Latin America, Malaysia, Indonesia and Africa (Hutchinson, 1957; Silcock, 1958; Beckford, 1972). The phrase "exploitation of the colonies" refers basically to the utilization of colonized people as a cheap and abundant labour force. Where there was an abundant indigenous population (as in Korea and Africa), the land of the colonized was expropriated and they themselves were forced to work on European farms (plantations, haciendas, etc.); such is the colonial policy of "pacification" and "containment". Where the population resisted or was thought not to be useful, they were more or less exterminated (West Indies and North America) and a labour force from the outside (mainly Africa) was imported; such is the colonial policy of "suppression" and "extermination". In many cases a colonial policy of "exploitation" evolved, being midway between "pacification" and "suppression". In any comparative or cross-cultural study of plantation systems as types of socio-cultural systems, the manner in which workers are exploited, rather than the level of investment, is therefore the crucial (independent) variable. After all, how else would capitalists have accu-

mulated a surplus and invested it as capital in the colonies? Why would colonies such as St. Kitts, after more than three hundred years of capital investment, continue to be extremely poor if it were not for the fact that even though St. Kitts workers created this surplus for investment capital in the first place it was taken away by the capitalists through the colonial mechanism of the plantation system?

G. Conclusion

The Wolf-Mintz model requires that historical conditions of colonialism, and the labour process based on coercion and land use, be explicitly spelled out if it is to be useful. We have seen how, in the plantation mode of production, at the same time as the development of underdevelopment occurred, the more the workers were separated from the means of production and became increasingly production, the more their social and economic condition sunk deeper into objective poverty. This was because the plantation mode of production and the development of different types of plantation system were mechanisms of the development of underdevelopment in the hinterland, due to colonial ties to the metropolis (Best, 1967). The plantation mode of production, as exemplified by the St. Kitts system, is distinguished by its heavy dependence upon "resident" wage labour. To an increasing extent, workers have to rely exclusively on wages, and capitalists must concentrate on the production of commodities with exchange- rather than use-value (for if a capitalist produced for use-value only, he would eventually have insufficient funds to pay wages and would cease to function). For this reason workers enter into an exploitative relationship when they sell their labour to capitalists for the production of commodities with exchange value only. In the plantation system, therefore, all the forces of production

are based on the exploitation of the working class. In this sense the capitalist mode of production is basically no different from the plantation mode of production, as the former initially used force to expropriate the peasants' land through enclosure and other means to accumulate "primitive capital". But capitalism made a transformation to industrial development, while the plantation mode of production was not able to do so. The more complex the development of the plantation system infra-structure becomes, the greater is the exploitation of the working class. This process occurred under the modern plantation system in St. Kitts throughout the latter half of the 19th Century and the first half of the 20th. The development of an organized labour movement was a direct response to this increasing exploitation, the development of working class consciousness resulting from a recognition of this reality and leading to the organization of the working class struggle to end both economic exploitation by foreign capital and colonial domination.

To sum up, the decolonization struggle in St. Kitts consisted of three stages. The first was the 1834 legal Emancipation of slaves and the subsequent disappearance of the slave plantation system. The second stage was the political emancipation of the colonized people in 1967 and the end of direct colonialism. The third and present stage is the struggle to achieve economic emancipation which would assure full political independence and the end of capitalist domination. Each stage has been a step toward the development of the next, and the process is likely to continue until the liberation of the St. Kitts people from colonial-capitalist exploitation has been completed.

APPENDIX

Collection of the Data

I have relied on ethnographic and historical data for my analysis of change in a plantation society. I have also presented a partial description and selective history of St. Kitts.

The ethnographic data are those concerned with a description of the society, economy and polity of St. Kitts during the period of field work and during the lifetime of several informants (some of whom were 75 years old). They were gathered during the summer of 1968, during December of 1968, and from June 1969 to February 1970. The first two trips were undertaken in my capacity as research assistant to Professor Richard Frucht. St. Kitts was chosen primarily because the island was one of the earliest sugar plantation systems in the West Indies. Even today sugar is the mainstay of its economy, as there are hardly any significant alternative industries as compared, for example, with Barbados.

The results of the first trip involved the collection of information concerning the St. Kitts sugar industry, working class movements and household composition (including a workers' census in Molyneux and Philips villages). In addition, it was possible to establish personal friendships and an overall evaluation of my own fieldwork problems. The main impression I received was of the intensity of political attitudes among those I met. Political discussion among family members and friends often led to serious arguments. This reminded me vividly of my youth in Korea, soon after Korea was "liberated" from Japanese rule at the end of World War II. Koreans fell into two camps, often dividing family members and friends. Struggles in homes and streets often led to violent outbursts. Thinking back, the deep divisions (which exist even today)

were mainly based on the desire by one camp to build a modern Korea which was to be based on foreign ideology and capital, as they hated everything about old Korea and saw it as outmoded, and the desire by the other camp to build a modern Korea which was to be based on "self reliance", that is, without foreign help. I found very similar conditions in St. Kitts. I arrived there two years after the establishment of the Associated States (although an elected cabinet system had existed since 1956), marking the end of colonial rule. There were two political parties, labour and PAM, whose supporters were separated even to the extent of their seating arrangements in church. The atmosphere retained the tension created in the 1967 State of Emergency.

On the basis of the 1968 trip, the Canada Council granted further support in the form of a doctoral fellowship. Initially my intention was to investigate and test some of the results of Zeitlin's concept of "political generations" as used in his study of Cuban working class politics in a post colonial period. However, during my second trip I became increasingly aware that I was more interested in the social class basis of politics as the source of political generations. Political divisions appeared to be drawn along class lines rather than being strictly generational. Furthermore, I found out that, especially in the villages, people in the 30 - 45 year old age group were significantly absent, due to heavy emigration to the United Kingdom and the U. S. Virgin Islands. I was therefore not able to interview enough of this age group to do an adequate study of political generations. In reformulating problems in the field, I decided to continue collecting political generation data, but would shift the emphasis onto social class, especially onto working class politics and its changes in relation to changes in the organization

of sugar production. This decision was based on the idea that the politics of self reliance and class contradictions are the basis of socio-political change and the working class struggle to build a modern nation state.

On the first trip, I stayed in Molyneux village with the local teacher and his family and ate with a woman who ran a local grocery store. On the second trip, I rented a house which belonged to a woman residing in England. My neighbours were all black families working for the Molyneux Estate, except for some old women who had retired from the estate and one family man who worked for the Basseterre Brewery.

My major sources of ethnographic data were a household census in the two villages of Molyneux and Phillips, and individual informants. The two villages were selected mainly because they are related, with many residents of the new Molyneux village being drawn from the old plantation village of Phillips. These two villages therefore provided a comparative basis for understanding changes in recent years in the relationship between estates and the working population. Furthermore, most of the estate workers in both these villages worked for the Molyneux Estate, except for a few in Phillips who worked for the Mansion Estate, and I was therefore able to study the relationship between workers in the two villages and the Molyneux Estate more intensely. In the questionnaire I stressed items relating to estate workers' changing experiences, the organization of production changes, working class movements, income sources, household composition, emigration and community activities. In most of the more than two hundred households surveyed, I was able to check the information at first hand, but the members of several households were temporarily absent (visiting families abroad). However, only in a few cases (mostly

friends) was I able to get accurate information on the sources and the amounts of household income, unless the informants relied strictly upon estate earnings. I was able to go over ten years of estate records by using the Molyneux Bonus Book which shows wages, rent deductions, advances, and other debts. It was especially difficult to get accurate information on remittances received from abroad. Many villagers and workers were very suspicious once they discovered that I was neither the Chinese medical doctor they were expecting to return from Scotland, nor a member of the Peace Corps. They thought I was a sugar industry or Government investigator, trying to gather information for the reorganization of the sugar estates, since sugar production was declining and the industry was finding itself in increasing difficulties during my stay, resulting in several rumours about proposed changes.

I also administered a questionnaire to over 120 members of Young Labour throughout the St. Kitts and Nevis branches. The first two sections dealing with political attitudes and personality were answered satisfactorily, but the third section of open-ended questions were hardly answered at all.

During my field work I had great difficulty in my relations with different segments of informants, due to racial and class considerations. Initially, most of the working class informants placed me in a "white" category as I was not "black". I was successful in overcoming this to some extent, especially at the village level. I explained my Korean background, and that Korea, like St. Kitts, had been a colony in the past, that even today it is divided into two with the Southern part being a colony of the United States, and that many people (especially peasants and workers) suffer from hunger, especially in spring time. Many

Kittitian workers understood that I was "one of them in heart" so to speak, and also why I was interested in studying them. Nevertheless, they were troubled because I was not one of them as far as life style and education were concerned, and they also saw me as belonging to the (white) upper class. As a result, they often provided contradictory statements about their problems. I found them to be more consistent when they were at my residence and had had a few drinks. For example, when they classified me as "white" they presented a uniform picture of the poor and wretched conditions of their life, hoping I would be "merciful", although the manner of their presentation was tinged with hostility. When they classified me as one of them, however, I found them quite dignified in spite of their genuine poverty, with a measure of confidence in themselves and in the future of St. Kitts. Thus, several workers were quite proud of the fact that through the working class struggle they had been able to have tin roofs on their houses and were able to send their children to school.

My relationship with upper class (white) informants was quite different because of my education and life style, and they welcomed me into their homes and parties, because my presence both increased their status and provided novelty. Nevertheless, with the exception of a few, they were uniformly suspicious of what I was doing. Many of them told me they could give me all the information I needed, but that there was really "nothing" to study in St. Kitts in view of its small size, meaning that there was no need to study the (white) planters and managers, and that studying "Negroes" was not worth the effort. As one planter stated, "They have no history, and they are like monkeys who create nothing but trouble".

Beyond the memory of my informants in describing St. Kitts plantation society and its politics, and as a supplement to ethnographic description, I relied upon archival sources and existing historical writings on St. Kitts, the West Indies and Britain. The full list of these will be found in the bibliography. I present data from such sources with caution. I employed them in order to construct my arguments, not to validate them. Data pulled from these sources are suggestive as to what has probably been the case, and do not represent unequivocally what was in fact the case, for two main reasons, namely, the class bias of the many historians (e.g. Davy, Beachy, Burns, Burdon) and the standardization of error in official records such as the Blue Books. There has been a growing number of historical works on the West Indies, both at the time of slavery (e.g. Goveia) and in the post-Emancipation period (e.g. Hall), but historical knowledge about the British West Indies during the period between 1850 and the 1890's is very limited, especially with regard to the working class struggles during the most critical period of the sugar crisis brought on by free trade and competition from beet sugar in the Leeward sugar islands. Douglas Hall's latest book which deals with five Leeward Islands between 1834 and 1870 is in this sense an important step towards building up an adequate body of knowledge.

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